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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Backs Egyptian Stance on Israeli Reactor

NC2703120596 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab League voiced its concern over reports of a nuclear radiation leak from Israel's Dimona reactor.

Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid said the League strongly supports the Egyptian stance, which stresses the need for Israel to clarify its position and place all its nuclear establishments under the supervision and guarantees of the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency]. He reaffirmed that this is a legitimate Arab demand and Israel is requested to respond to it.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 19 Mar

NC2603211296

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 19 March edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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1. Sharm al-Shaykh Peacemakers Summit Viewed
2. Workers Reject Sale of Public Sector
3. U.S. Senate's Freeze of Aid to Bosnia Criticized
4. Late al-Azhar Imam Jad-al-Haqq Eulogized

SHARM AL-SHAYKH PEACEMAKERS SUMMIT VIEWED

In this issue of AL-SHA'B, columnists focus on the peacemakers summit, which was held in Sharm al-Shaykh, Egypt, on 13 March.

—In his regular 1500-word article on page 5, Muslim Brotherhood General Guide Mustafa Mashhur says the summit appeared to be "a public relations exercise to back the Zionist enemy and obtain support for Clinton and Peres in the elections that will take place this year in their countries." He says President Clinton's visit to Israel and his offer of financial help were meant to get the Jewish lobby in the United States' vote for Clinton.

Maintaining that the conferees in Sharm al-Shaykh "turned a blind eye" to ongoing "Zionist terrorism," Mashhur says this fact encouraged Israel to demolish the house of Yahya 'Ayyash and shell southern Lebanon with more than 500 bombs immediately after the summit. Mashhur says the world's conscience failed to be moved by "the thousands of Palestinians that have been killed in terrorist Zionist operations" since 1948. He asks: Is Jewish blood more precious than Arab blood? Does Peres' policy of collective starvation against the Palestinians help achieve peace? Why did the summit not commit Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories and implement UN resolutions. He determines: "Defense against the usurper occupier is logically and internationally legitimate, and surrender to occupation is a weakness and humiliation rejected by Islam."

Addressing the Islamic countries that participated in the summit, the Muslim Brotherhood general guide says: "The land of Palestine is an Islamic land; aggression on it is aggression against your land. All Muslims constitute one nation, indeed, one body. He adds: "Your Islamic peoples refuse to recognize the Zionist enemy and reject the agreements that have been signed with it."

Mashhur emphasizes that Islam is the religion of peace, "but we want a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace, not a fragile, temporary one that will collapse after some time. This peace must be free from any form of injustice." Noting that violence is practiced in many countries, Mashhur calls for establishing a neutral international committee to study the root causes of this phenomenon. "It is not enough to use violence and oppression to address this phenomenon; violence breeds violence," he says.

He says Israel and the Western media are falsely accusing Islam and Muslims of being violent. He says Muslims are actually the victims of violence in many places, such as Bosnia, Kashmir, the Philippines, Chechnya, and Palestine. Noting that "Peres and Clinton are demanding that Yasir 'Arafat take further measures to oppress the Islamic resistance," Mashhur urges 'Arafat "not to enter into battle with the Islamic resistance, especially since this resistance has undertaken not to direct its weapons at any Palestinian."

Mashhur maintains that the Palestinian cause concerns the entire Islamic nation and that no Palestinian group or Arab ruler can tamper with it. Seeing that Israel is working to achieve its ambitions in the Arab world and that the position of the Arab and Islamic governments is one of "capitulation" to rather than a rejection of the Israeli designs, Mashhur comments: "It is impossible for things to remain unchanged. The strong will not remain strong forever, and the weak will not remain weak." He adds: "A new generation of Muslim youths will emerge from among the Islamic peoples. These youths will take pride in their religion. They will not accept weakness and humiliation, and they will drive their governments to liberate Palestine from its usurpers so that it, and the

al-Aqsa mosque, will regain their Islamic identity. The Zionist enemy will be beaten, and the Islamic countries will regain their strength."

—A 500-word unattributed report on page 8 cites a statement by "the Muslim Brotherhood in the West, signed by official spokesman Kamal al-Halbawi," commenting on the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. The report does not give the date or the place of the statement. The statement says the summit "touched on some issues with a positive view, but ignored many others." Maintaining that Islam renounces violence and has nothing to do with terrorism, the statement says: "The Muslim Brothers believe that any peace not based on justice cannot hold, even if it is guarded by all the people on earth, because God almighty rejects injustice, does not accept it for his people, and ordered that it be resisted and confronted." The statement expresses hope that a just peace will prevail, but says that "every nation has the right to struggle to regain its usurped rights." The statement says the Muslim Brothers "believe that any measures taken by the peacemakers summit will not succeed in removing the serious threats facing the peace process and its future prospects if the just demands of all parties are not considered. The international organizations must assume their role in full so that all sides will comply with international resolutions, without discrimination between the strong and the weak or between the rich and the poor."

In a 3,000-world article entitled "The Bitter Harvest of the Sharm al-Shaykh Summit" on page 2, Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn discusses the immediate results of what he terms as the "summit of the protectors of occupation." He begins by attacking official Egyptian media for trying to portray the summit as a victory for Egypt and for peace. This, he says, shows that the officials in Egypt "feel they committed a crime." By twisting the facts, he says, these officials are trying to attenuate the public's anger. He says the summit sought to take practical measures "against our people in the occupied territories, against displaced Palestinians worldwide, and against the Islamic movement in general." He says the peace that the conferees are talking about does not mention Israel's full withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

Coming to the immediate results of the summit, Husayn says the first result was Israel's success in organizing a campaign against Islam and Muslims. He says Israel, which has always sought security coordination with Egypt and the Arabs against "the Islamic awakening," achieved this in the summit. He says that in the summit, the Israelis explicitly raised the issue of the Islamic movement, not only in Palestine, but also in the Arab world, as a threat to Israel's security. The Israelis also referred to what they described as instigation against Israel by Islamic ulema, preachers, and shaykhs, he says. He views this as "rude, insolent interference in the Islamic nation's affairs and faith."

The second result of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, says Majdi Ahmad Husayn, is that it mixed up terrorism and national resistance against occupation. "No better service could have been rendered to Israel," he says. He contends that the Arab rulers help the occupation authorities when they describe the operations of the Islamic Resistance Movement-Hamas as terrorist operations. He says the Arab rulers, instead of using the "armed resistance" practiced by Hamas to pressure Israel into speeding up its withdrawal from the occupied territories, are attacking and weakening this resistance, giving Israel more room to maneuver and more time to achieve its objectives.

A third result of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit is that it "consolidated the oppressive Zionist grip on all Palestine," Husayn writes. He suggests that the summit provided an international umbrella for Israel to continue "a large-scale oppression campaign" against the Palestinians. Referring to President Clinton's offer of assistance to Israel, Husayn says: "When Clinton supplies the Israelis with more than $100 million worth of advanced technological equipment to resist the Palestinian fedayeen movement, he is actually telling them: Stay in all of Palestine forever." He comments: "We are sure that this equipment will not stop the resistance. It only exposes the hostile intentions."

Still discussing the results of the summit, Majdi Ahmad Husayn notes that the Turkish president, who attended the summit, had signed defense and water agreements with Israel. He says the summit resulted in a new, undeclared alliance among the United States, Israel, Jordan, and Turkey. He says the summit, considering Hizballah a terrorist organization, gave Israel a free hand in Lebanon. Another result of the summit, Husayn says, is that it blessed "Russian terrorism against Muslims." He says that on the eve of the summit, Yeltsin's forces killed 300 Muslims in Chechnya.

Husayn says the United States will invite the Sharm al-Shaykh parties to a followup meeting on 28 March "to distribute roles in the battle for eliminating the Islamic resistance in Palestine. The Americans and the Israelis will play the role of the generals and the Arab rulers the role of the informers." He says the Arab rulers will be asked "to give information about the Palestinian mujahidin, hand them over, prevent financial donations from arriving for them, or pressure the Palestinian Authority [PA] to escalate its oppressive role against the Islamic movement." He says "the aggressive concerns of this alliance will undoubtedly target the Islamic

movements from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Gulf, and all kinds of pressure will be applied to tighten the blockade against Sudan, Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Libya." But Husayn concludes: "No matter how international pressure and rulers' oppression grow, we do not believe that the Arab-Islamic identity of this region can be uprooted." He says Egypt, which during the era of President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir supported the people of Algeria, Yemen, Iran, Palestine, and Sudan, "cannot now become a center to undermine the Palestinian national movement. It cannot remain a base for attacking every free voice or every country independent from the American-Israeli will."

—In a 3,000-word analysis on page 3, Dr. Majdi Qarqar, trying to determine whether the Sharm al-Shaykh summit really sought to advance peace or to fight terrorism, analyzes leaders' speeches to the summit, the summit's final statement, and the news conference by the summit's cochairmen, Presidents Mubarak and Clinton. He finds that in all these cases, there was much more emphasis on terrorism than on peace. For example, he says the advancement of the peace process received only 30 percent of the emphasis in the final statement while the confrontation of terrorism received 70 percent. He finds that the statement "referred to Palestinian terrorism but failed to mention Israeli terrorism in any way." The analysis is accompanied by a table showing the number of times the word "peace" and the word "terrorism" were mentioned in the speeches and in the final statement, and by a second table on President Clinton's references to these two words. The writer contends that the summit "was aimed at confronting the Arab struggle against the occupier" and to "help Israel get out of its crisis."

Another 2,000-word article by Badr-al-Din Ghazi on page 3 notes that the world leaders held their summit only after attacks that targeted Israelis; they failed to meet after major terrorist operations worldwide. "This means that Jewish blood is more precious and valuable than the blood of the rest of mankind. This is a hateful racial logic, as ugly as the Nazi logic," the writer says. He says resisting the occupation is not only a legitimate right, but also the duty of every people under occupation. He warns that security cooperation between the PA and the Israelis against Hamas "would make the PA lose the primary source of its legitimacy".

—In a 2,000-word article on page 5, Labor Party Deputy Leader Muhammad Hilmi Murad maintains that the recent Hamas bombings in Israel were a reaction to "terrorist" Israeli acts, represented by the assassination of Hamas bomb-maker Yahya 'Ayyash and of former Islamic Jihad leader Fathi al-Shaqaqi. He wonders whether the real aim of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was to stage "a political show or a ceremonial gathering to help Israel morally against Hamas and other Palestinian organizations, support Israeli extremism, and offer political help for Clinton, Peres, and Yeltsin in their election battles." He accuses the United States of practicing double standards against the Palestinians and he warns that neglecting the real causes of international terrorism will only make things worse.

—In a 700-word article on page 7, Husayn Fahmi Mustafa wonders what kind of peace the participants in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit wanted to make. "Can peace be achieved when there is occupation, aggression, poverty, deprivation, racism, and fanaticism," he asks. Maybe they wanted people to surrender, he says, adding: "The free, struggling peoples will never raise the banner of surrender." He notes election objectives for Peres, Clinton, and Yeltsin and concludes that "the heroic resistance against the Zionists will continue until full victory is achieved."

WORKERS REJECT SALE OF PUBLIC SECTOR

In a 1,500-word report on page 4, Ahmad 'Abd-al-Mun'im cites representatives of 100,000 workers in the engineering, mineral, and electrical industries as totally rejecting the sale of the public sector under any pretext. In a meeting for their syndicate, the workers said they are willing to reform the public companies and bear every responsibility in this regard, but they reject the sale of the companies. They said the public sector has remained the pillar of the national economy for 30 years and that the public companies faltered because of contradictory economic and administrative policies. The workers warn against any relinquishment of their rights.

U.S. SENATE'S FREEZE OF AID TO BOSNIA CRITICIZED

An unattributed 600-word article on page 7 criticizes the U.S. Senate decision to freeze $200 million in financial aid to Bosnia. The writer says the Americans claim that Iranian revolutionaries still operate in Bosnia, and he says the American officials are angry because the Bosnian prime minister visited Iran and signed a cooperation agreement there. Seeing this as interference in Bosnia's internal affairs, the writer remarks that Washington wants Bosnia to sever all its links with the Islamic world and become a European country "saturated with corrupt Western culture."

LATE AL-AZHAR IMAM JAD-AL-HAQQ EULOGIZED

In a 1,800-word report on page 6, 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad praises the work and positions of al-Azhar

Imam Jad al-Haqq 'Ali Jad-al-Haqq, who died last week. He says the imam restored to al-Azhar its glory and authority and firmly defended his creed and country. He notes Jad al-Haqq's call for implementing the Islamic shari'ah, his call for dialogue with the Islamic Group, his promotion of al-Azhar education, and his firm support for Muslims in Afghanistan and Bosnia.

—In a 1,000-word article on the same page, Islamic scholar Dr. Yusuf al-Qardawi eulogizes Imam Jad-al-Haqq, noting that "he stood like a rock in the face of the secularists and the Westernized, who wanted the nation to change the color of its skin." He also notes Jad al-Haqq's assertion that Jerusalem "is the eternal capital of Muslims."

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Dispute With U.S. on Meeting Agenda Explained

JN2603173496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1110 GMT 26 Mar 96

[Interview with Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, Palestinian Legislative Council member and minister of local government, by 'Arif Salim in Jericho on 26 March—recorded; from the "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Salim] Discussions on an agenda for the follow-up committee that emerged from the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, which is scheduled to meet in Washington on 28 March, showed divergent positions and substantive differences between the Palestinian National Authority and the U.S. Administration. These differences basically revolved around the agenda of this meeting, which will be attended by delegations from all the countries that took part in the summit. The Sharm al-Shaykh participants approved the formation of this committee to draw up an operational mechanism for implementing the summit resolutions.

The differences between the Palestinian and U.S. sides, which surfaced during the preparations for the Washington meeting, reflect differences in the interpretation of the summit resolutions. For example, Washington believes that the agenda of the follow-up committee created at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit should include one issue: combating terrorism. The Palestinian side believes that the agenda should include all the summit resolutions. These resolutions should be handled comprehensively and interconnectedly, rather than partially or selectively. Details of these differences are explained in this interview with Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, member of the Legislative Council and minister of local government.

['Urayqat] It is true that the follow-up committee assigned to implement the Sharm al-Shaykh resolutions will meet on 28 March. The parties that attended the Sharm al-Shaykh summit will participate. This meeting is aimed at drafting recommendations to submit to the leaders of all the countries that attended the summit. A few days ago, we were surprised by the fact that the U.S. Administration sent the participating parties an agenda that is really selective. The U.S. agenda for the meeting highlighted a single recommendation from the Sharm al-Shaykh summit to the exclusion of all others. I am talking about combating terrorism at the regional and international levels.

As you must know, the Sharm al-Shaykh summit produced four basic recommendations. The first recommendation calls for supporting the Palestinian-Israeli peace agreements, and their implementation. It calls for continuing the peace process and resuming the negotiations. It also calls for meeting the security requirements of the Palestinian people. The second recommendation calls for extending urgent economic aid to the Palestinian people. The third recommendation calls for supporting peace on the remaining negotiating tracks — namely, the Syrian and Lebanese tracks — to help achieve comprehensive peace. The fourth recommendation calls for combating terrorism at the regional and international levels.

His excellency the president began an international campaign to explain the Palestinian stand on the draft agenda. In this campaign, we rejected the U.S. agenda. In this context, and at the instruction of his excellency the president, I left for the Arab Republic of Egypt, where I met with the Egyptian foreign minister. During this meeting, I presented the Palestinian paper, which was well received and espoused. Egypt, along with Arab and European countries, will launch a great diplomatic effort in this regard.

[Salim] Dr. 'Urayqat, this paper must have thoroughly explained the Palestinian position on the U.S. agenda.

['Urayqat] Yes. I will explain this. But first, I would like to say that we met with the representatives of 17 European countries, as well as the representatives of Canada and Japan, yesterday. During these meetings, we presented them with the Palestinian paper; that is, the Palestinian draft agenda. We also met with the U.S. consul general, to whom we presented the Palestinian draft agenda.

What I would like to say is that our paper enjoys the sweeping support of the Arabs and world countries. As a matter of fact, the U.S. draft agenda cannot serve as a good start. The world must note that the Israeli measures, including collective punishment, the attempts to return things to square one, the house demolitions, the threats to carry out expulsions, the closure of educational institutions, and the economic stifling of the

Palestinian people to starve them, must top the agenda. The situation in the Palestinian National Authority areas has reached catastrophic proportions. Consequently, the world is required to act to halt these Israeli practices and the collective punishment immediately. The world must immediately provide a budget that takes into account the urgent needs of thousands of Palestinian families, particularly workers' families, where the situation is virtually at the point of starvation.

In addition, I would like to note that 28 March is the deadline for the Israeli redeployment in Hebron. One of the recommendations of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit calls for the implementation of the agreements. Israel announced that it will not comply with the agreement. Hence, the implementation of agreements and the meeting of deadlines must also be placed on the meeting's agenda. I do not want to elaborate on the adverse consequences of Israel's failure to comply with the agreement.

[Salim] Is this reflected in the Palestinian paper, Dr. 'Urayqat?

['Urayqat] Of course. Israel actually announced that it will not comply with the agreement, and that it will put it in a deep freeze. It suspended all negotiations. It is not complying with any provision of the agreement. If we are to discuss the areas identified by the code name B, or the Palestinian rural areas, we would say that the Taba accord stipulates that the Palestinians will exercise full power over public order in all Palestinian rural areas. This provision was not implemented. Israel did not comply with this provision. Consequently, such matters must top the agenda. In this regard, I would also like to say that the agreements stipulate that the final status talks must begin on 4 May. The Israelis talked about political separation. Well, we are for a real political separation between the two peoples. We are for a separation that leads to mutual respect and good neighborliness between two states. We support real separation, which must be the outcome of the real and serious negotiations on the substantive issues that are due to start on 4 May. These negotiations will address the issues of Jerusalem, settlement activities, borders, refugees, and the right to self-determination. We make a distinction between a real political separation and the stifling policy being pursued by the Israeli authorities across our international outlets to Jordan, the Arab Republic of Egypt, and Israel. This is suffocation rather than separation.

The Palestinian paper underlines the need for a balanced agenda. This paper stresses that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was designed to support the peace process and uphold its continuation, nothing else. That the United States chose a single topic and said that it will be the only topic on the agenda cannot be a good start. This is our view. This is why we made these international moves. The Palestinian paper was submitted to international parties. I can honestly say that this paper enjoys a great support.

[Salim] What is the position of the French Government on the agenda?

['Urayqat] As a matter of fact, the French Government's position is clear, as manifested in the letter French diplomats sent to U.S. officials. In this letter, the French diplomats unequivocally said that the effort to halt violence and terrorism cannot succeed unless there is a just peace that upholds Palestinian rights. This is the gist of the French position that the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs communicated to the U.S. State Department.

Moreover, there is virtually a unanimous European position in support of these demands and in support of the Palestinian paper. Likewise, the Arabs support our demands. When we presented our paper to the U.S. side, we told the Americans that we want the meeting of the follow-up committee in Washington to be a success. However, the success of this meeting must rest on the actual recommendations of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. We also said that attention should be directed to the deteriorating situation in the Palestinian territories, in the areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority, and to the specter of starvation that threatens the Palestinian people.

[Salim] Given the fact that the meeting is two days from now, how will these differences on the agenda be settled?

['Urayqat] As I said, we have been working day and night over the past seven days. We have spoken about our meetings and journeys. At this time, President Yasir 'Arafat is meeting with representatives of the U.S. Government. He also met with representatives of European governments today. He is scheduled to hold other meetings this evening. We met with the representatives of some European countries in Jericho this morning. Contacts are under way. I would like to say that the Palestinian position enjoys international support.

[Salim] It seems that this U.S. position is completely in line with the Israeli demand, which stipulates that the issue of terrorism must be isolated from the overall peace process and from the needs and requirements of the Palestinian people. As a matter of fact, this U.S. position reflects acquiescence to the Israeli position.

['Urayqat] That might be a true representation of the situation. But, I must also say that the draft statement the United States submitted at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was identical to the content of the U.S. agenda. Nonetheless, this draft statement was amended. The end result was not completely what we wanted, but it was balanced. In the same vein, we want to retain this balance. The U.S. espousal of Israeli positions and the U.S. pandering to Israeli political requirements is fine with us. But, if we are to salvage the peace process and ensure its continuation, the tragic and calamitous situation experienced in the Palestinian territories must be taken into account and dealt with in all seriousness. Otherwise, we will have no peace process to speak of.

[Salim] Certainly. Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, thank you.

['Urayqat] You are welcome.

Palestinian Affairs: Envoy Views Israel's Measures, Washington Meeting

NC2703071596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2322 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—Zuhdi al-Qidrah, Palestinian ambassador to Cairo, called on participants in the meeting of the experts committee emanating from the summit of peacemakers, to be held on Washington on Thursday [28 March], to give priority in their discussion to the need to revive the peace process and compel Israel to meet its obligations.

In remarks he made today, al-Qidrah said Israel must be compelled to pull out of Hebron on schedule, in accordance with the agreements concluded with the Palestinian Authority [PA]. He stressed the need to lift the siege and end the suffering of the Palestinian people, as demonstrated by collective punishment, seizure of land, settlement activity, demolition of homes, and the policy of expulsion, which the Israeli Government has endorsed and intends to carry out in the coming days.

Ambassador al-Qidrah accused Israel of violating the resolutions of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit one day after it was convened, adding that Israel used explosives and bulldozers to demolish homes despite its acknowledgment that the PA is combating acts of violence. Al-Qidrah added: Israel is giving the world the impression that it is the victim of peace in the region and that its actions are always in self-defense. However, it ignores the fact that it is practicing the worst type of terrorism by imposing a siege on Gaza and northern Palestine, preventing Palestinian workers from going to work, and creating a famine in Gaza, and this is the real terrorism, he added. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat on Peace Process, U.S. Aid

PY2703010196 Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 25 Mar 96 p A10

[Interview with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat by Ricardo Amaral in Gaza on 24 March]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Amaral] What are your expectations regarding the peace process?

['Arafat] We are unfortunately suffering the consequences of the Israeli refusal to implement the agreements signed by the Israeli and Palestinian governments. They have imposed collective sanctions on the Palestinian people. The blockade imposed on our people, both in western Jerusalem and in the Gaza Strip, has had terrible consequences. There is almost total unemployment, and the entry of the most essential items for everyday life has been banned. The blockade created a very sensitive and dangerous situation, very serious from the viewpoint of security. Israel justifies its attitude on the basis of actions by people who are very well known. Such an attitude, however, has actually hindered the peace process. I want to make it clear that when the Palestinian people suffered terrorist attacks in Bethlehem, Hebron, Jerusalem and other places, we did not seek to hinder the peace process or adopt destructive attitudes. Those attacks, I reiterate, were made against our people, but despite them we remain firmly committed to the peace process. We understand and deplore the loss of human lives, but we also deplore the loss of Palestinian lives. The Palestianian people cannot pay the price of peace while others collect the profits. We took strong action against radicals in our territory, but Israelis did not take the same measures against their own radicals. The radicals of both sides are known to cooperate with each other. This has been recognized by leaders of the Elai organization, who murdered my comrade Yitzhaq Rabin, my partner in the peace process. That group made official statements to newspapers. That is why the collective sanctions against Palestinians, like the closing of borders, will not be accepted by the Palestinians, by the Arabs, or by the international community. I would like to ask all the people interested in the peace process: Will the collective sanctions and the blockade favor the peace process or the radical sectors? I reiterate that they favor the radicals and hinder the peace process.

[Amaral] What is the relationship between the border closure and the Israeli electoral process?

['Arafat] I believe we are, unfortunately, being used as an instrument in the Israeli electoral campaign. All the parties involved in the campaign use the pressure on our

people as a positive element in their domestic electoral process.

[Amaral] How long will the Palestinians bear the blockade without retaliating or without undergoing a social outburst?

['Arafat] That is what I want to avoid, but I do not know how long, because this is an unbearable situation. I wonder how Israelis will live in peace if by their side there are people starving under the collective sanctions and the blockade. Israel does not allow us to import what we need or to export what we produce. Look at the flowers on this table: They are rotting on the streets, like the fruits, vegetables, clothing and furniture that our people produce and that cannot be exported. We are also not permitted to buy products to feed our people. This is madness. It is leading the Palestinian people to a huge explosion. I am not sending this message only to the Brazilian people but the world at large, so that they may help change it.

[Amaral] Can the blockade impede ratification by the National Palestinian Congress, in April, of the agreements ending the fight against Israel?

['Arafat] I really don't know how far this blockade will take us, but all possibilities must be taken into account.

[Amaral] Based on the agreements, the United States promised substantial financial aid to the Palestinian Government. How much have you actually received?

['Arafat] Very little. I don't know why, but very little. We are part of the suffering Third World. We must make it clear that we did our share. I then wonder why that help does not arrive. And I insist that we are paying the price of peace, while others are collecting the profits.

[Amaral] What is more difficult for you and for the Palestinian people: To make war or peace?

['Arafat] Peace is more difficult.

[Amaral] Why?

['Arafat] Because of the Israeli position, because of everything I have just said. Yet despite all that, we are committed to the peace process and we will continue to work for it. I call upon the international community to participate and assume its responsibilities toward the Palestinain people, in order to preserve and promote a process that is necessary for everyone.

[Amaral] You say that you have the radicals in your territory under control, but what can you say about groups like Hizballah, which operate from other countries?

['Arafat] I cannot interfere in the domestic affairs of other Arab countries. I believe, however, that a positive solution calls for a fair and total agreement for the entire region. What they are doing to the Palestinian people is a bad example for all those who want the peace process to continue.

[Amaral] Do you have anything to say about Brazilian Lamia Maruf, who is imprisoned in Israel? Peace agreements produced the expectation that she would be released.

['Arafat] Under the terms of the agreements, she should have been released, but this is one of the conditions that Israel has not met. Maruf and all the other imprisoned women were expecting to be released. It was a promise about which I was personally informed. We are reporting about this negative Israeli position in an official document sent to the Brazilian Government.

[Amaral] What role can Brazil and President Fernando Henrique Cardoso play in the peace process?

['Arafat] I call upon the Brazilian people, who are our friends; upon their government; and upon President Fernando Cardoso to adopt a position of solidarity with the Palestinian people, at this difficult time we are experiencing. Use your good offices at the international level to support our people, a people who chose the path of peace.

Palestinian Affairs: Shaykh Yasin Urges PNA, Hamas To Live 'Harmoniously'

JN2603205196 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in English 1930 GMT 26 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President 'Arafat, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and president of the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], today sent a Palestinian delegation to visit the ailing Shaykh Ahmad Yasin [founder of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas]. Dr. 'Isa Tarazi conducted a complete checkup on Shaykh Ahmad Yasin to be assured of his health.

Answering a question about the fatwa, or legal religious authorization of killing Palestinians with the hands of their [fellow] Palestinians, issued by one of Hamas' leaders abroad, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin recited a holy Koran verse: In the name of God, the holiest, the merciest. Even if you try to kill me, I will not kill you. I fear the Almighty God.

To a second question of the dialogue between the PNA and Hamas in Cairo, proving that Hamas leaders abroad have the greater influence on Hamas members inside, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin said: Those who live inside are living the fact on the ground. They are more entitled to take the decision than those who live abroad.

Concluding his speech, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin said: We, the PNA and Hamas, must live together harmoniously in one place and pursue all suitable means of dialogue to reach the ideal means of coexistence.

Palestinian Affairs: PA Claims Infrastructure of Hamas Military Wing 'Cracked'

TA2703121796 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 27 Mar 96 p 5

[Article by Lamia Lahoud: "PA Officials' Terror Crackdown Making Progress"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Palestinian Authority [PA] security officers assert that they are now capable of foiling 90 percent of attacks planned against Israel from their territory.

A leader of the Palestinian security services told THE JERUSALEM POST that in the past three weeks they have cracked the infrastructures of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] military wing, 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, and have arrested most of its leaders.

He said the information collected has given the PA a much better insight into how Hamas and Islamic Jihad operate. Israel, he added, understands nothing about the structure of Hamas.

The security officer, who asked not to be named said Palestinians consider it unfortunate that Israel is linking the continuing halt in the Oslo process to the capture of 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam leader Muhammad Dayf, who is held responsible for planning the most recent terrorist atrocities.

He said the Palestinian side is not willing to share its information with the Israelis until they agree to lift the closure of the territories and restart implementing Oslo 2. He said that while it is in the interest of both sides to cooperate on security issues and share information, the process cannot be one-sided.

The security source said the PA crackdown on Hamas was also aimed at ensuring stability in Palestinian areas and protecting the Oslo agreement, but it was not seen as fair to expect the PA to deliver Dayf in a matter of weeks when it took Israel years to capture some wanted Palestinians in Gaza.

He expressed resentment at statements by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] officers saying that only low-level 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam activists had been rounded up. He said the PA has arrested about 400 in Gaza, among them 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam leaders wanted by Israel for many years, and about 100 of those caught will be tried within the next three months.

The source said the most important gain made by the PA in the last three weeks has been the information gathered through interrogation.

A high ranking PA security officer in the territories said 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam's infrastructure has been badly damaged but he acknowledged that the capture of Dayf would make it easier politically for the Israeli government to proceed with Oslo.

Most 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam leaders are in Gaza, he said, but they recruit operators in the territories where large quantities of weapons have also been found.

The security officer said the new Islamic party announced in Gaza last week, the Islamic Salvation Front, includes political figures from Hamas. He said the PA welcomed an Islamic opposition which rejects violence, and that the Front would not protect Hamas activists suspected of links with 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam from arrest.

But the officer said it is difficult to penetrate the financial network that feeds Hamas, since it has developed sophisticated ways of channeling money in from around the world.

Another officer of the PA's Preventive Security Service said Hamas laundered money through bona-fide businessmen and legal organizations such as Islamic non-government organizations (NGO's).

As with all such operations, the difficulty is in tracing the original source and purpose of such money and it is not realistic simply to close all Islamic institutions offering social services, he said. Even bankers handling money that reaches 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam may not know to whom the money is being sent.

He said the closure had not prevented 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam from getting funds flowing through Islamic institutions and bank accounts both abroad and inside Israel. The PA would try to replace the Islamic institutions and provide welfare help through its own organizations, a PA official said.

A source close to the international donors said the PA wants to change the laws governing the activities of local NGO's now acting independently. It favored a system similar to Egypt's where even NGO's must report all dealings to the interior ministry.

The World Bank has proposed setting up a social fund to channel money to Palestinian NGO's as well as PA institutions.

It would thus come under the system of checks used for all donor money and offer the PA a way to replace Islamists in offering social services. Once such a social

fund is established, the World Bank would persuade donors to pay its annual budget, the source said.

Palestinian Affairs: PA To Disclose 'Grave Information' About Hamas

TA2603142696 Ramallah AL-AYYAM in Arabic 24 Mar 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, AL-AYYAM — Palestinian security sources said yesterday that the raids on and large-scale selective detentions conducted among the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] ranks in the last three weeks have dealt blows to various areas of the Hamas infrastructure.

An informed source in the Palestinian Authority [PA] said that "the preventive security service (which led the campaign of arrests and the interrogation of Hamas leaders and activists) will soon disclose the grave information it gathered during weeks of interrogations."

The source added that "the information at our disposal shows the true nature of the Hamas infrastructure, the aims of the operations it staged against Israel, and the involvement of foreign quarters in attempts to undermine the peace process and the PA."

An official in the Palestinian Security Service said that "the service has refused to brief the Israeli side on the results of its interrogation of Hamas activists. Furthermore, it refuses to coordinate with the Israeli side because of the siege imposed on the Palestinian territories and the pressure being applied to the PA."

The PA has arrested about 900 people, most of whom are Hamas activists from the military and political organs of the movement, in addition to Islamic Jihad leaders and activists. They were detained after Hamas assumed responsibility for the four bombing operations in Israeli cities during which 58 people were killed. Detentions are still under way in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Secret' Hamas Group Reportedly Receives Orders From Jordan

JN2603182196 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A ranking Palestinian security official confirmed the disclosure of a secret network in the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam group that was preparing for new suicide attacks. More details in the following report by Salim Badawi:

[Begin Badawi recording] Following the reports on the existence of divisions in the ranks of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, between the leadership inside and outside the occupied territory, on one hand, and between the political and military wings, on the other, new reports today indicate that a secret organ in the 'Izz-al-Din Qassam faction is receiving orders from Hamas leaders in Jordan.

Muhammad Dahlan, official in charge of Palestinian Preventive Security, said that the members of this secret group are more serious than Muhammad Dayf and Yahya al-Ghul, members of the Hamas military leadership who have not yet been arrested. It is known that the arrest of Muhammad Dayf tops Israel's conditions to lift the siege on the Palestinian territory, because it is believed that he is directly responsible for the recent suicide operations.

Muahmmad Dahlan disclosed that most of the members of the secret group of the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam faction are not known by the Palestinian Authority and that some of them are capable of entering Israel. This means that the Israelis themselves are not aware of the members identities.

Dahlan said that the explosions stopped when the Palestinian police began its campaign against Hamas and because the channels of communication among the various Hamas groups have stopped. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Arrested Hamas Member Confesses To Receiving Outside Orders

JN2603191896 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 26 Mar 96

[Interview with Ibrahim Muhammad Sulayman Abu-'Ulwan, Hamas member, by an unidentified correspondent; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Prayers and peace be upon Prophet Muhammad, the most honorable messenger, and upon all of his family members and companions. What is your name, and what organization are you affiliated with?

[Abu-'Ulwan] My name is Ibrahim Muhammad Sulayman Abu-'Ulwan. The organization is the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas.

[Correspondent] You conveyed written or verbal orders to liquidate some leaders of the Palestinian Authority, the security bodies, and Fatah. Did you fear serious repercussions as a result of these orders?

[Abu-'Ulwan] This is what happened. We discussed this issue with the brother official who gave us the orders and told us there might be very negative repercussions against us. This man insisted his objectives must be achieved, however. Therefore, I reluctantly conveyed

this information to the brother in charge of the secret group. I thank God Almighty that many of the people whose names I gave to the group were not harmed. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] You conveyed a fatwa [religious ruling] to the effect that the fugitive Hamas members are permitted to open fire on Authority personnel. Where did this fatwa come from?

[Abu-'Ulwan] The fatwa came from outside the territories. However, the fugitives did not pay any attention to it, praise be to the Almighty God. It is an unrealistic fatwa that has nothing to do with Islam.

[Correspondent] Do you believe that it is in the interest of our homeland to receive orders from outside and implement them against Palestinian citizens while we are fighting side by side and in the same trenches?

[Abu-'Ulwan] These were mistakes. Praise be to the Almighty God, we vowed not to accept this fatwa or abide by it, because it conflicts with Islamic sharia. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Do you regret what you did?

[Abu-'Ulwan] I totally regret what I did. I also believe that I seriously erred against my people, my homeland, my kinsfolk, and my children. I do not condone the position I took, for myself or anyone else.

[Correspondent] Do you have any message for the Hamas leaders and members?

[Abu-'Ulwan] I want to tell them to fear the punishment of God Almighty, with regard to acts against the Palestinian community and with regard to the youths, as well as the sons, children, wives, and mothers of these youths.

[Correspondent] What do you want to tell Palestinian men and Palestinian youths?

[Abu-'Ulwan] I want to tell them that they must rally around their national, legitimate, and elected authority under President Yasir 'Arafat.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Discusses 'Military Siege' With U.S. Consul-General

JN2703075796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat received U.S. Consul-General Edward Abington at the presidency in Gaza. The discussion dealt with the latest developments in light of the continued Israeli military siege on the Palestinian territories and its negative impact on the Palestinian economy. They also discussed the preparations for the meetings of the follow-up committee of the Sharm al-Shaykh peacemakers conference. The meetings are to convene in Washington on 28 March.

Palestinian Affairs: Hawatimah's Deputy To Arrive Early April

TA2603172496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1430 GMT 26 Mar 96

[Report by Yasir 'Atilah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Taysir Khalid, deputy to Nayif Hawatimah, leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], told us from his office in Amman that he will arrive in the territories at the beginning of April and that he will be accompanied by a number of DFLP Political Bureau members such as Dawud Talhami and Salih Zaydan. Some other Palestine National Council members will arrive in the Palestinian Authority areas later.

[Begin recording] [Khalid] In the first week of April.

['Atilah] And who will come with you?

[Khalid] I will be happy to meet with the kinsfolk and to pursue the struggle from the homeland's soil for the establishment of relations of coexistence that ensure the interests and rights of both sides and which do not nullify these interests and rights. [end recording]

As for DFLP leader Nayif Hawatimah, the necessary arrangements for his arrival have not been finalized yet, but according to Taysir Khalid, Hawatimah will arrive in the territories once the arrangements are finalized.

Khalid elaborated on the DFLP's stance regarding the abolition of Palestine National Charter articles that call for the destruction of the State of Israel.

[Begin Khalid recording] First of all, we are not slaves of provisions. We do not sanctify provisions. We sanctify rights. Introducing amendments to provisions is not the problem, but if those provisions involve the Palestinian people's rights, this is unacceptable. If the Israeli Government shows a readiness to recognize the resolutions of international legitimacy relating to the Palestinian problem and abandons the policy of disavowing the Palestinian people's rights — especially the right of return, self-determination, and independence — then definitely not only the DFLP but an overwhelming majority of Palestinian public opinion will be ready to introduce amendments and changes to the Palestinian National Charter. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: PA Asks Israel To Approve Hawatimah's Entry

TA2703060596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Palestinian Authority [PA] has officially requested from Israel the approval for entry into the territories of Democratic Front for Palestine Leader Nayif Hawatimah. PA representatives said that Hawatimah's presence at the upcoming meeting of the Palestine National Council [PNC] is important. The PNC is to convene soon in order to vote on canceling parts of the Palestinian Covenant that call for the destruction of Israel. The Israeli Defense Ministry will consider the request since Hawatimah has had observer status in the PNC and is not an official member.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Orders Arrest of PSS Chief Saqr

TA2703095896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian security personnel have arrested General Misbah Saqr, who is officially in charge of the Preventive Security Services [PSS] in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip — this, on the orders of Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat. Saqr is suspected of misconduct.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that Gen. Saqr was arrested several days ago; however, a senior Palestinian source only confirmed the arrest this morning. Saqr was appointed approximately two years ago; however, his post was emptied of all content following the respective appointments of Colonels Jibril al-Rujub and Muhammad Dahlan to head the PSS in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Gen. Saqr's supporters said that he was arrested after he sent a letter to 'Arafat complaining about corruption in the PA.

Palestinian Affairs: Yasir 'Arafat Leaves for Cairo 27 Mar

JN2703100296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat left the homeland this morning for Cairo on the first leg of a tour of Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and several Gulf countries.

During these visits, President 'Arafat will brief Arab leaders on the latest developments in Palestine in light of the continued military and economic siege.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Arafat Meets IDF General, GSS Head on Terror, Closure

TA2703060996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A senior official in the Palestinian Authority says that the head of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Southern Command, Shlomo Yanay, and the head of the General Security Service [GSS], met last night with Yasir 'Arafat and the heads of the Palestinian security services in the West Bank and Gaza. The source told a Qol Yisra'el reporter that the meeting dealt with the war against terror and the closure of the territories. The Palestinians briefed the two Israeli officials on their efforts to combat terrorism.

Palestinian sources say Hisham 'Abd-al-Raziq and Dr. 'Isa Tarazi of Gaza visited jailed Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin. Yasin, via 'Abd-al-Raziq and Tarazi, called on Hamas activists to listen to their leadership within the territories. The source also said Yasin refused to express a clear position in regard to the recent terror attacks in Israel.

Algeria

Algeria To Attend Sharm al-Shaykh Follow-Up Meeting

LD2603225896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] After the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, Washington will hold a follow-up meeting on 28 and 29 March, to be chaired by U.S. Assistant Secretaries of State Robert Pelletreau and Philip Wilcox.

The meeting will be devoted to examining ways of fighting against terrorism and reviewing the peace process in the Middle East. A great number of countries, including Algeria, will participate. Ramdane Lamamra, Algeria's permanent representative at the United Nations, will represent Algeria. [passage omitted]

Algeria: Pelletreau Trip Said To Mark Change in U.S. Algeria Policy

MM2603160396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 26 Mar 96 p 17

[Article by Rashid Khashanah: "Algeria and the Temptation of Victory"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The visit of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs Robert Pelletreau to Algeria has moved U.S.-Algerian relations from one state into another and reflected a change in Washington's policy centering on two axes at one and the same time: the internal strife in Algeria and the conditions in the Maghreb.

This visit, the first by a high-ranking American official to Algeria since 1992, was the result of a number of developments that began with the visit to Washington by former Algerian Foreign Minister Mohamed Saleh Dembri last spring and has since then entered a stage of interaction within narrow circles, out of the limelight.

When Pelletreau, during his visit to Tunisia about the middle of last December, announced that he plans to visit Algeria and praised the results of the Algerian presidential elections which ended in the triumph of President Liamine Zeroual, it became evident that the contacts had reached an advanced stage and that U.S.-Algerian relations were approaching a watershed.

The preparations for Pelletreau's visit to Algeria took some time (over four months), and this indicates that the visit reflects the reaching of an understanding on matters of economic, political, and regional dimensions.

Naturally, it is not possible to isolate the U.S.-Algerian rapprochement track from the consultations between the two international sides concerned with the Algerian crisis, namely France and the United States, in which the key episode was President Jacques Chirac's visit to Washington. Furthermore, it is not possible to isolate the U.S. step from the progress achieved in French-Algerian relations since the visit of French National Assembly Speaker Philippe Seguin to Algeria and the speedy signs of normalization that ensued from it.

It is a fact that the U.S.-Algerian normalization has blocked one of the main windows for international pressure on the regime and brought it a significant diplomatic gain which will enable it to move and maneuver in the internal and external arenas. Such are the pitfalls of "victory," as victory might tempt one to resort immediately to easy solutions and might bolster the ranks of those calling for settling matters once and for all, an option which would be a losing one in the medium and long terms.

In the internal field, the new American way of dealing with the Algerian regime might lead to the belittling of the importance of the opponents of the military establishment — be they civilians or fundamentalists — and externally, it might make it look easier to bring pressure to bear on Morocco through the escalation of the situation in the Western Sahara.

This temptation may perhaps be enhanced as a result of the success scored by military hard-line wing, which had been harping on the theme of the internal conditions of the main parties, and in particular the Socialist Forces Front and the National Liberation Front. The hand of the eradicationist forces' centers could be detected in the shocks which these two latter parties have undergone.

The error into which this wing has fallen is that it persists in its evasion of national reconciliation, for which the presidential elections had provided a legitimate political point of entry, and in its wasting of time and opportunities in its quest for camouflage for the real causes of the Algerian crisis.

For this reason, it is important to discover the essence of the U.S.-Algerian entente. But what is still more important is that the Algerian leadership should not succumb to the temptation of running into easy, smooth roads, that it should feel strong enough as a result of the new international treatment it is receiving to consolidate the political solution option — internally and regionally — and thus end the stage of inaction and hesitation that has reigned since the presidential elections, and that it should embark on implementing the reforms President Zeroual announced immediately after his election victory.

Algeria: 'Criminal Group' Abducts 7 French Clergymen

LD2703112796 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A criminal group has abducted seven French clergymen. They were snatched from their monastery at Tibihirine municipality in the province of Media around 0100 [0000 GMT].

A security services' statement said the security forces began their search as soon as they heard the news. The hunt is still under way, the statement added.

Algeria: Security Forces Foil Car Bomb Attack in Tizi Ouzou

LD2603203796 Paris Radio France International in French 1730 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Algeria, a car bomb attack was foiled on 24 March on the prefecture of Tizi-Ouzou, the capital of greater Kabylie. This is reported today by the privately owned newspaper LE MATIN.

The vehicle, packed with explosives, is reported to have been spotted in time by the security forces, who evacuated the area around the prefecture before moving it.

Egypt

Egypt: Egyptian Airliner Hijacked to Libya

JN2703161396 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just received the following from Cairo: An Egypt Air plane, en route from Luxor to Cairo, was hijacked. We have no additional information. It seems that the plane was asked to change route to Tubruq, Libya. Some people are linking the hijacking with the events that have been going on in Libya over the past few days.

Egypt: Israel Radio Reports Hijacking of Plane to Libya

TA2703161996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An airplane of the Egyptian national carrier which was on an internal flight from Luxor to Cairo has been hijacked. Security sources at Cairo Airport said the hijackers ordered the pilot to fly the plane to Tobruk in Libya. At this point there are no other details.

Egypt: Hijacked Plane Approaches Libya

NC2703163096 Paris AFP in English 1621 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Mar 27 (AFP) — Two armed men hijacked an Egyptian plane with 100 passengers on board during a domestic flight Wednesday [27 March] and ordered it to fly to Libya, aviation officials said.

They seized the EgyptAir Airbus A-310 as it flew from the southern town of Luxor to Cairo.

The hijackers ordered the plane to Tobruk in Libya, the civilian aviation authority said. "The plane is approaching Libyan territory," an official said.

The men talked in Arabic, it said without giving further details.

Egypt: Israel To Be Contacted on Nuclear Reactor Danger

NC2603142896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1155 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)— Egyptian diplomatic sources have stated that Egypt will renew its many contacts with Israel during the next few days regarding reports from some Israeli sources in the past two days on the dangers of a possible nuclear disaster at Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor if an earthquake should hit the area in the Negev Desert where the reactor is located. The objective of the contacts is to verify this information and tell Israel of Egypt's deep concern that such a catastrophe could occur in case any disturbances or mistakes in the Israeli nuclear or chemical programs.

In exclusive statements published in today's issue of AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I the diplomatic sources say that Egypt will soon begin contacts on two levels on these dangers. The first level will include direct contacts with Israel and some European countries that have expressed concern about the issue of nuclear weapons and Egypt's need to get official Israeli clarification of reports of dangers from the Israeli nuclear program and its radiation.

The second level will include necessary contacts in this regard with the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA], asking it to intercede with Israel. It should demand an elimination of dangers from Israel's nuclear program to neighboring countries, including Egypt. The IAEA should also once again pressure Tel Aviv to conclude specific agreements placing all of Israel's installations under international supervision and turning the Middle East into a region free of nuclear weapons.

in accordance with Egypt's demands and President Mubarak's initiative in this regard.

The sources revealed that Egypt has started taking some practical measures to observe the Egyptian-Israeli border areas, particularly those close to the Negev Desert. The objective is to carry out a number of experiments, have periodic early detection programs, and review and monitor the dangers posed by the Israeli nuclear program project as a preliminary step until a final solution with Israel is found.

With regard to reports leaked from Israel the day before yesterday on Israeli efforts to get the United States to support Israel's nuclear deterrent force, even during peace time, by having a secret appendix in this regard included in the U.S.-Israel defense agreement that will be signed during Peres' visit to Washington at the end of April, the Egyptian sources said Egypt has received no specific confirmation of these reports. However, Egypt will continue its contacts in this regard with the U.S. Administration and Israel to confirm this information and will present its viewpoints on the need to find a quick and fair solution to the question of the Israeli nuclear program.

These sources added that Egypt continues to oppose any agreements of this kind because they would affect the future of the peace process and the cooperative relations with all the Arab parties Israel is dealing with if a comprehensive peace is established in the region.

Egypt: Ministry Asks For Information on Israeli Nuclear Program

NC2603162096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1415 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA) — Ambassador 'Adil al-Safti, first under secretary of the Foreign Ministry, stated that today the ministry asked Egypt's ambassador in Israel, Muhammad Basyuni, to send all the information carried by Israeli television on the Dimona reactor's nuclear program and leakage of nuclear waste from the reactor after the recent earthquakes that hit the region in the past months.

The television program reported that the waste material was stored improperly which lead to a radioactive leak that has been absorbed in underground water.

The ambassador said Egypt will evaluate the entire situation to learn the truth of this information and adopt the necessary position.

He emphasized that, in light of this information, Egypt will define its move and handle this serious development if it is true and will demand an end to the dangers posed by the Israeli nuclear program on neighboring countries, including Egypt.

Meanwhile, informed sources reported that Egypt is watching the region for any radioactivity that could indicate the existence of such dangers resulting from leakage from nuclear reactors or other sources.

Egypt: 'Radioactive Emergency' Declared Due to Israeli Leak Risk

NC2703070596 Cairo MENA in English
2210 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—AL-AKHBAR reports exclusively in a front page article on what it terms a radioactive emergency declared in Egypt hot on the heels of news about radioactive leak risks at Israel's Dimona reactor.

According to an official source, some atomic energy experts and scientists have been detailed to monitor radioactive pollution at several border points.

Findings are to be conveyed to a Cairo-based operations room to react promptly to developments and protect Egypt from any radioactive pollution.

"Egypt has a radioactivity detection network that covers all areas and borders," the source notes.

The three dailies carry other front page reports that the Foreign Ministry has asked for a full briefing from Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni on the relevant Israeli television reportage. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Musa—Israeli Measures Counter Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

NC2603170496 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1552 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA) — Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that Egypt is currently holding consultations with France, Arab countries, and particularly the Palestinians regarding the meetings of the follow-up committee of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit scheduled to convene in Washington on 28 and 29 March. He said that Egypt notified ambassador Ahmad Mahir, head of the Egyptian delegation on the committee, of all instructions relating to the Egyptian position during the meetings. He pointed out that the consultations and instructions aim at ensuring a cohesive stance so that the Washington meetings will be in line with the general framework agreed on at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit and the spirit of the summit resolutions.

Musa stressed that the Sharm al-Shyakh statement called for strengthening the peace process. He noted that Israel's measures of sealing off the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, deportation of Palestinians, and other unrequired actions toward the Palestinians run counter to the Sharm al-Shaykh summit statement. He said that the Palestinian and Israeli authorities are bound to make efforts to stop the wave of terrorism. He stressed that starving the Palestinian people, closure of the territories, and demolition of homes cannot be accepted.

Regarding the follow-up committee meetings in Washington and the possibility of holding a subsequent meeting on the ministerial level, Musa said that a ministerial meeting is indeed expected to be held in April.

Egypt: Mubarak, Hungary's Goncz Hold News Conference

NC2603131796 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1110 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has stated that Egypt is doing its best to ease the suffering of the Palestinian people, noting that the goal of the summit of peacemakers in Sharm al-Shaykh was to promote peace and end the Palestinians' suffering. He added that Egypt is doing all it can using various ways to ease the suffering of the Palestinian people.

Speaking at a news conference this morning in the Presidential Office following his talks with Hungarian President Arpad Goncz, President Mubarak said they discussed various issues of bilateral cooperation, with emphasis on the economy, which is the main feature of the age. He noted that the Hungarian president is bringing with him a large delegation of businessmen to get acquainted with and explore avenues of bilateral cooperation.

Hungarian President Goncz said he hoped to consolidate bilateral cooperation, relations, and coordination, on the level of the government and the business community. He said he hoped the visit would lead to tangible results in the next few months. He expressed his country's profound appreciation of the prominent role of Egypt and President Husni Mubarak in achieving peace and easing tension in the Middle East. He stressed that Egypt serves as a beacon in the region.

At the beginning of the news conference, President Mubarak welcomed the Hungarian president and his accompanying delegation to Egypt. He added: We are working to revive our old cooperation. We have held a few rounds of talks since the Hungarian president arrived in Cairo, talks that primarily focused on upgrading bilateral cooperation. He added: We discussed various areas of bilateral cooperation, particularly in the economic field, be it in the form of trade deals, the establishment of joint companies, or agricultural cooperation. This cooperation goes back a long way. All our attention focused on economy, trade, and joint companies, because they represent the characteristics of the age, he added.

President Mubarak added: There was major agreement on all the points I discussed with President Goncz, who is being accompanied by a large delegation of businessmen, some of whom visited the Cairo International Fair to familiarize themselves with areas of bilateral cooperation, be it in trade or otherwise. The Hungarian president has invited me to visit Hungary. I accepted. We also agreed to encourage the exchange of visits between the Egyptian and Hungarian sides to explore the various avenues of potential cooperation.

Concluding, President Mubarak stressed that the fields of cooperation between Egypt and Hungary are wide. He welcomed the Hungarian president and his delegation again, wishing them a successful visit to Egypt.

The Hungarian president responded with a statement in which he said: Allow me to add something to what President Mubarak has mentioned. The Hungarian delegation accompanying me was selected with a view to ensuring the success of our talks in Cairo regarding developing and consolidating ties of cooperation and so that ministerial meetings could be held on the sidelines of the visit to allow the representatives of the different economic sectors and businessmen to get together with their Egyptian counterparts.

He added that talks during the visit reviewed the various aspects of bilateral relations. We did not detect the slightest difference in positions. We share the same views on prospects for progress and development as well as political cooperation, he said.

The talks were held in a cordial spirit and were successful, the Hungarian president remarked.

In his statement the Hungarian president said: If I was asked three months from now about the outcome of the visit, I would say it offered positive results for the months ahead.

He expressed his appreciation of the role President Husni Mubarak is playing in the Middle East to curb regional tension. We believe that Egypt is acting as the beacon of the Middle East and can act as an adviser to other states on regional issues, he said.

He wished Egypt and its president success.

Asked how the agreements the two countries signed will affect trade and economic ties, President Mubarak said:

I believe the agreements will have a considerable impact on cooperation. As you know, our cooperation goes back a long way in agricultural and industrial fields.

The president pointed out that there are old agreements, some of which need amendment. He added that all these agreements are on the level of bilateral economic ties.

The Hungarian president commented: Bilateral cooperation has been regulated. We signed a new agreement this time on cooperation in fighting organized crime. This is a first agreement in this field.

He noted that Hungarian exports to Egypt dropped to one third in 1989 [as received] although they used to have a balanced trade exchange. We seek to restore the two countries' exports, even beyond their old levels, he said.

The Hungarian president pointed out that the type of Egyptian export to Hungary has changed and that they want to expand the scope of exports. These goals need new circumstances, because we are living in a market economy. I believe we have all the necessary elements to achieve this goal, he said.

Asked about the role Egypt is playing to relieve the suffering of the Palestinian people, President Mubarak said: Egypt is doing its best to ease the Palestinian people's suffering. We are always urging the Israeli side and talking to the United States about this.

President Husni Mubarak explained that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was basically convened to advance the peace process, lift the siege on the Palestinian people, and try to end the suffering of the Palestinians so that they can go about their daily life.

He noted that the follow-up committee will meet in Washington to discuss a mechanism for achieving this.

President Mubarak added: We always insist on promoting the cause of peace, removing the suffering of the Palestinian people, and confronting terrorism. Egypt is doing all it can to lift the siege on the Palestinian people by every means and through contacts with the United States, the Israelis, and the European countries.

Asked if Egypt will again raise the issue of Israel's membership of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty now that Israel has admitted a nuclear leak from the Dimona reactor, President Mubarak said: We are discussing the dimensions of this issue and in light of this discussion we will determine how to proceed. We are against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and we insist on freeing this region from all weapons of mass destruction. We called for a commitment to this objective years ago.

On cooperation between Egypt and the EU and between Egypt and the Mediterranean countries, Mubarak said: Hungarian-European cooperation is an issue that concerns Hungary. As regards Hungarian-European cooperation with the Mediterranean countries, we have the Mediterranean Forum, which groups the countries that overlook the Mediterranean. The Forum held two meetings, the second was in Alexandria. We do not object to cooperation between Hungary and the EU or between Hungary and the Mediterranean. As long as Hungary is part of the EU, there is no problem; there is basically no problem.

Asked how the agreements that have been signed would increase Egyptian-Hungarian cooperation, the Hungarian president said: I would like to add something to what President Mubarak has said: Hungary believes that cooperation between the EU and the Mediterranean countries does not entail any competition. I emphasized this firm Hungarian position in the talks I held in Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Malta.

The Hungarian president added: As regards cooperation between Hungary and Egypt, there are various prospects, such as exporting [Hungarian] agricultural production systems, seeds, Hungary's experience in genetic engineering, the use of water in irrigation, and the search for water.

He added: There are also prospects for cooperation in the areas of transport, railway design, and the export of buses for local assembly. There is also the possibility of cooperation in the area of petroleum. We have expertise in oil exploration and the transfer of technology. These are the main points we discussed as far as economic cooperation is concerned.

Asked what he expects from Thursday's [28 March] meetings of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit's follow-up committee in Washington, President Mubarak said: We still insist that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was a summit of peacemakers. We are pushing the peace process ahead while taking security measures. We will continue to insist on this line because this was the basis of the summit. The Washington meeting, which will discuss a mechanism, will not depart from this, because the summit was held on this basis. The mechanism must serve what has been agreed upon.

President Mubarak was asked: Can it be said that all the economic agreements Egypt is signing worldwide, the latest being the agreements with Hungary, as well as the economic reform policy are aimed, along with the security campaign, at combating terrorism? The president replied: The agreements involve economic cooperation in various spheres, such as the establishment of joint

companies. This is aimed at creating job opportunities for citizens, which would curb terrorist operations.

Asked about cooperation between Egypt and Hungary in light of the changes after the collapse of the communist system in East Europe, the Hungarian president said: Hungary has seen radical change in the past five years. Some 75 percent of state ownership has been privatized.

He added: Last year we put our economy on the right course. This had a high social price. But we are sure we cam build the Hungarian economy on solid and permanent foundations.

He added: We seek to build our relations with the outside world. My visit to Egypt falls within this context, because Egypt is one of our most important economic and political partners in the Middle East. We would also like to help rebuild the Palestinian regions as part of the multilateral activity, like economic development and water management, in the peace process. We want to do more in this regard.

Egypt: Mubarak, Hungarian President Goncz Conclude Talks

NC2703092196 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0830 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak and Hungarian President Arpad Goncz concluded their talks at the presidential offices this morning.

President Mubarak bade the Hungarian president and the accompanying delegation farewell at the end of their official visit.

The prime minister and ministers of defense, information, foreign affairs, the business sector, education, and industry saw the Hungarian guests off.

The Hungarian president is scheduled to pay a private visit to Sinai today.

Egypt: Literature, Tapes Advocating 'Violence, Terrorism' Seized

NC2603172896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1610 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA) — The State Security Detective agencies have managed to monitor terrorists in the Alexandria Governorate trying to consolidate their activity in printing and distributing books containing extremist ideas that violate Islamic teachings and adopt violence and terrorism.

After storming their hideouts, a collection of recording cassettes of extremist Muslim Brotherhood members advocating violence and terrorism were seized.

Also, Salafi leaders were observed collecting the aforementioned booklets in some bookshops in Alexandria where extremists are employed to distribute them during 'Id al-Adha prayers.

This morning, in coordination with the Alexandria Security Directorate and the Administration of Taxes and Customs Detectives, the State Security Detective agencies staged a campaign against bookshops and publishing houses. It resulted in the arrest of five people engaged in distributing these booklets and recording cassettes. A large number of booklets containing extremist ideas that al-Azhar had previously banned from circulation were also seized in these bookshops.

Cassette tapes containing sermons by Muslim Brotherhood leaders, extremist elements, and mosque imams who stir up bigotry, urge hatred for the regime, and advocate violence and conflict within society leading to the nation's destruction were also seized.

The Prosecution has been notified to investigate.

Egypt: New al-Azhar Shaykh Comments on Appointment

NC2703115096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1030 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Al-Azhar Shaykh Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi thanked President Mubarak for the confidence he has shown in him by appointing him to this position.

In a statement after he was received by the president today, Dr. Tantawi said: I pray to Almighty God to guide me to best serve my religion, nation, and homeland and to bless me with the gift of being able to say and do the right thing.

Dr. Tantawi pointed out that the position of al-Azhar Shaykh entails a heavy responsibility. He added, however, that when man's intentions are honorable and his plan wise, the Almighty makes the difficult easy and the distant close.

The al-Azhar shaykh appealed to Almighty God "to make us listen to Your words and do their best to act upon them."

Asked what course he will follow in this position, Dr. Tantawi said: A man needs time to explore matters first. But I have in my heart the will and determination to serve our religion and nation and to draw up sound plans to crown our work with success, raise us to the level we aspire to, and enable us to serve the public interest, God willing.

Touching on the propagation of Islam in the future, the al-Azhar shaykh said that propagating Islam calls

on its own men, in whose piety, ethics, and efficiency we trust. He pointed out that the propagation of Islam is the responsibility of the minister of awqaf. We will cooperate with him in every way possible, since we all cooperate in the service of our religion and homeland, he said.

Libya

Libya: Diplomats Cited on Threat of 'Fundamentalist Unrest'

NC2603142296 Paris AFP in English 1245 GMT 26 Mar 96

[Report by Elie Austa]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, March 26 (AFP)—Libya is facing a growing threat of Islamic fundamentalist unrest, diplomats said Tuesday [26 March] after at least 26 people died in the latest clashes between police and militants.

According to travelers at the Libya-Egypt border, hundreds of escaped Islamic prisoners are holed up in the mountainous region of Darnah in eastern Libya after armed clashes with security forces.

"Searches have been carried out since Wednesday in Darnah, which is sealed off," a diplomat in Tripoli told AFP. "Bodies have been seen in the town's hospital by medical workers."

An African diplomat in the Libyan capital said he had been "alerted last Tuesday evening" to unrest in the eastern Banghazi region.

Libyan travelers arriving at the Egyptian border post of al-Sallum broke the news Sunday when they said 400 Islamic fundamentalists had escaped from Banghazi jail and fled to Darnah, 100 kilometres (60 miles) to the east.

They said the prisoners belong to an Islamic fundamentalist group which once had the backing of Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi before he turned on them two years ago and confiscated their arms.

However, diplomats said the figure of 400 was probably too high, given the difficulty of obtaining precise information from a sealed-off area.

The Libyan authorities only reported a clash between police and drug traffickers in Banghazi.

The Banghazi region was also rocked by Islamic unrest in June and September last year in which at least 30 people died. Tripoli blamed the violence on "infiltrators from Sudan and Egypt."

But a Western diplomat said that to blame it on outside forces rather than home-grown militancy "is no longer plausible."

The riots could not have flared up yet again without "a continuity which requires the complicity and support of the local population," he said.

"What we are seeing is strict road checks, reinforcements sent to the northeast and entry banned into the Darnah region over the past few days," another European diplomat said.

"If the fundamentalist phenomenon is not so visible throughout Libya it is gaining ground and especially in the northeast," he said.

He added that the people of eastern Libya, long the country's economic and political centre, now feel marginalised.

"On top of that, there is the influence of fundamentalists in Egypt, Algeria and Sudan, and economic problems due largely to the UN's flight embargo and economic sanctions which have devalued the Libyan dinar and increased obstacles to travel and trade," the diplomat said.

An African diplomat said the Islamic military government in Sudan was at the root of the problem, as it was in other neighbouring states.

Al-Qadhdhafi, who has in the past set himself up as a champion of Arab socialism and then as a financial backer of Muslims worldwide, has rounded on Islamic fundamentalists both at home and abroad in the past two years.

He has described them as "charlatans, apostates and heretics" who deserve to "die without trial, like dogs."

Last July he said the Moslem militants waging bloody anti-government campaigns in Libya's neighbours Egypt and Algeria were "the shame of Arab nationalism."

On March 9 two Libyan opposition groups said al-Qadhdhafi had escaped an assassination attempt by Islamic militants.

"The Militant Islamic Group" claimed the attempt on al-Qadhdhafi's life in Sirt during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan in February, in a statement sent to the Arab daily AL-HAYAH and dated March 6.

However, a European diplomat in Tripoli said it was open to question how representative such opposition groups were.

"The current events are more embarrassing than dangerous," he said. "The regime is not shaken by them."

Libya: Opposition Figure Calls Clashes 'Prelude' to Popular Uprising

NC2603190496 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Libyan opposition has restated that clashes took place between Libyan security forces and opposition groups in the eastern part of the country. The clashes were followed by the escape of a number of prisoners from a prison near Benghazi. While diplomatic sources have belittled the importance of these clashes, the Libyan opposition reiterated that these events represent the first spark of an overwhelming popular uprising.

According to diplomatic sources in the Libyan capital, 26 people were killed during the confrontation that broke out northeast of the country between security forces and opposition groups. The sources said that stringent security measures have been adopted on roads leading to the scenes of the clashes.

[Begin Libyan opposition official Burayk al-Suwaysi recording] In a disparate attempt to control all the sectors of Libyan society, security forces recently stormed various areas and arrested many people during a wide-scale campaign throughout the country. This triggered clashes between the citizens and the Libyan security forces in various areas of Libya, particularly in the eastern part, including Darna and other areas in al-Jabal al-Akhdar.

Certainly, these clashes are a prelude to a popular uprising God willing. It will involve all the Libyan people's sectors and factions. [end recording]

Libya: Narcotics Bureau Reports Drug Seizure, Killing of Traffickers

LD2603210796 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A source at the Anti-Narcotics Bureau has stated that the value of a quantity of drugs seized following the arrest of a large smuggling ring during the past few days is estimated at millions of Libyan dinars. The source pointed out that the confiscated drug haul is made up of quantities of heroin, hashish, tablets, and hallucinogen powder. The source added that a quantity of weapons in the possession of the smugglers was also confiscated.

The Anti-Narcotics Bureau yesterday announced that its forces, along with the cooperation of security personnel, were able to arrest a large ring for smuggling narcotics, which was brought into the Great Jamahiriyah from usurped Palestine via a sea access east of the Great Jamahiriyah. He stressed that elements of the ring were arrested. However, some of them were killed during the chase operation mounted by the security forces.

Libya: Yemeni President Supports al-Qadhdhafi Call for Arab Summit

LD2703094796 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0905 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 27 Mar — The brother leader of the revolution has received a reply from the Yemeni president, 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih. In it, the latter reiterated the importance of the brother leader's initative when he urged for the convening of an Arab summit.

President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih has also urged the brother leader of the revolution to continue his efforts and historical role to save the Arab nation from its actual disunity by striving to realise Arab unity given his place in the Arab world, his knowledge and his accurate analyses of Arab affairs.

Sudan

Sudan: Further on 3 Iranians Being Held by Eritrea

NC2603125996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1105 GMT 26 Mar 96

[Iranian names as received]

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 26 Mar (MENA)—The MENA correspondent in Khartoum has learned that the three Iranian passengers on the hijacked Sudanese plane who are being held by the Eritrean authorities work for Irangas, which is carrying out numerous projects in Sudan.

Informed sources say one of the men is 'Ali Rida, the manager of the company. The other two are an engineer called Muzaffar and a technician in the company, Abu-al-Qasim Mahdian.

'Abd-al-'Aziz Shiddu, minister of justice and attorney general, said that the Sudanese Government will ask Eritrea to hand over the hijackers of the Sudan Airways plane—two Sudanese citizens.

He said the government will ask for the hijackers to be handed over in accordance with the agreement on the extradition of criminals signed between Sudan and Ethiopia in 1946. He clarified that when it gained independence from Ethiopia, the Eritrean Government expressed its commitment to implement all the charters and international treaties signed by Ethiopia. Among them is the extradition of criminals agreement signed between Sudan and Ethiopia.

The Sudanese oppositionists who hijacked the plane the day before yesterday asked the Eritrean Government to grant them political asylum.

The Sudanese authorities have introduced intensive security arrangements at Khartoum International Airport and the other national airports to prevent such an incident from being repeated. Similar incidents have occurred three times in two years, which seems to indicate that security at Khartoum airport is lax and is easy to penetrate.

The hijacked Sudanese plane returned to Khartoum yesterday after the Eritrean authorities allowed it to return. The passengers and pilot praised the authorities for hosting them and treating them well. The Eritrean authorities took them on an outing in Asmara.

Sudan: Justice Minister 'Determined' To Win Hijackers' Extradition

AB2703100796 Paris AFP in English 0936 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Khartoum, March 27 (AFP) — Eritrea will fail to give a proper trial to two two Sudanese who hijacked a plane from Khartoum to Asmara to demand political asylum there, Sudanese Justice Minister Abdel Aziz Shiddo said on Wednesday [27 March].

Sudan is "determined to win extradition of the two hijackers to stand trial because in Eritrea they will not be tried in accordance with international accords", Shiddo said, quoted in the daily AKHBAR AL-YOUM.

Jaafar Ibrahim Hassan and Ezzedin Hassan, members of the Sudanese security services, diverted a Sudan Air flight on Sunday from Khartoum to Asmara, where they asked Eritrean authorities for asylum.

Asmara, which has cut diplomatic ties with Khartoum, is still investigating the two, but has underlined that there is no extradition treaty between the two countries.

Shiddo also condemned Eritrea's detaining of three Iranians who were on the flight and were not allowed to return to Khartoum with the passengers and crew, saying it was "a grave breach of international law".

The Iranians, identified only as Abul Qasim Mahdian, Ali Reza and "Muzafar", "were on a working visit to Sudan for their petroleum company and the Sudanese government is responsible for their safety", the justice minister said.

Tehran has demanded their return, saying they had been detained in Asmara only because they did not have adequate documents since they had not intended to travel outside Sudan.

Shiddo said his country was considering revising laws to stifffen penalties against hijackers. [passage omitted]

Sudan: Opposition Reports Rebel Capture of Ethiopian Border Town

EA2603130096 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan in Arabic 0400 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] SPLA [Sudan People's Liberation Movement] forces have succeeded in capturing a principal strategic garrison, seven days after capturing Khawr Yabus garrison. Pachala garrison [on Ethiopia's border with southeastern Sudan] was captured on Sunday [24 March] morning at 0830 Sudan local time.

This came in the framework of the implementation of the second stage of the Black Fox Operation. SPLA forces under the command of Commander Wilson Deng succeeded in capturing Pachala town following three hours of intense fighting during which they managed to destroy the [Sudanese National] Islamic Front's forces there which consisted of a brigade, and seized many weapons and a great deal of equipment. Details will follow later.

Pachala town is considered strategic by both the SPLA and the front party's government. It is the last remaining town along the southern Sudanese-Ethiopian border, and was in the grip of the Islamic front's forces.

It is worth mentioning that SPLA forces commanded by John Kong Nyuon and Malik (Agar) captured the strategic Yabus garrison in southern Blue Nile on 16 march, in the first stage of the Black Fox Operation. The SPLA is thus now in control of all the international borders of southern Sudan. [passage omitted]

Sudan: Khartoum Accuses Ethiopia of Assisting Southern Rebel Group

AB2603165196 Paris AFP in French 1501 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 26 Mar (AFP) — Sudan today accused Ethiopia of having dispatched troops to southern Sudan to help the southern guerrilla movement in taking control of two towns near the international border. "Ethiopian forces crossed the border and engaged in fighting with our troops in Pachala and Khawr Yabus," the military high command stated in a communique issued by the SUDAN NEWS AGENCY, the official news agency. "Our troops had to be evacuated from the regions following the land offensive in which tanks and heavy weapons were used." "The Ethiopians handed over control of the two villages to the Sudanese rebels," the high command further stated.

The Sudanese People's Liberation Army [SPLA], the leading southern guerrilla movement, announced on 24 March that they had captured Pachala and Khawr Yabus in the Upper and Blue Nile Provinces respectively

in an offensive launched on 18 March. It is the first SPLA operation near the Ethiopian territory since President Meles Zenawi severed ties with the guerrilla movement after he took over power in 1991. Addis Ababa expelled SPLA fighters from its territory in 1991 but relations with the Sudanese guerrilla movement "improved" following the deterioration of relations between Ethiopia and Sudan last year.

Furthermore, the Sudanese high command says it has "reliable information" regarding a concentration of Ethiopian troops at the Sudanese border, "near the Blue Nile and Upper Nile Provinces." "The Sudanese Army has taken measures to guarantee the nation's security," the communique added without giving further details.

On 24 March, Mr. Daniel Kodi, the SPLA spokesman in Cairo, said "there was no direct aid from Ethiopia" in the attack on Khawr Yabus, 500 km southwest of Khartoum. This new battle follows the one launched by the SPLA in October at the southern border. At the time, Sudan accused Uganda of having supported the Sudanese rebels, but Kampala denied the allegations.

John Garang's SPLA has been waging a civil war since 1983 to end what it calls the domination of the Arab-Muslims of the north over the mainly animists and Christians of the south.

Sudan: SPLA Leader Says Rebels To Attempt Northward Advance

AB2703101396 Paris AFP in English
0934 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 27 (AFP) — South Sudanese rebels waging a new offensive against government troops near the Ethiopian border will take their drive to the north, their leader said in an interview published on Wednesday [27 March].

"Upcoming fighting will be a great surprise. I can't say more but we will work our way to the north with force...," John Garang, head of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), told the Arab daily AL-HAYAT.

SPLA forces have taken two government garrisons, Pachalla and Khour Yabus, 500 kilometers (300 miles) southeast of Khartoum, along the Ethiopian border in their "Black Fox" offensive launched on March 18.

"The secret of our victories is that we have used the element of surprise," Garang said.

"Pachalla was the main government stronghold at the border and was reinforced by large amounts of weapons and strong defenses. We took it in a battle which lasted three and a half hours on Sunday," he said.

"It had a garrison of 1,500 troops, all of whom were killed, wounded, lost in the surrounding jungles or captured by our troops," he said.

The SPLA captured in the seige five tanks, over 20 artillery pieces and a large number of automatic weapons, "enough for us to fight for three months without the weapons we already have," Garang said.

Garang denied claims by Khartoum that Ethiopian troops had captured the garrisons then handed them over to the SPLA, saying his soldiers received no aid from Addis Ababa.

"The Sudanese government always explains its failures to its people by blaming their losses on foreign powers," he said.

Ethiopia's foreign ministry on Wednesday called Sudan's accusations "pure invention (aiming) to divert the attention of the Sudanese people from their internal problems".

Addis Ababa expelled SPLA fighters from its territory in 1991, but in the past year has reopened contacts with the rebels after a deterioration in relations with Khartoum, the SPLA says.

The SPLA is the main rebel faction in the mostly Christian and animist south waging a 12-year civil war to end domination by the mostly Moslem north.

Sudan: Paper Claims U.S. Plan To Overthrow Sudanese Regime

NC2603184496 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic
19 Mar 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Administration has prepared a new plan to topple Sudanese President 'Umar al-Bashir's government in collaboration with some African countries. Sources note that the main points of the plan are based on meetings being held with certain military commands in Sudan. Contacts to this effect indeed took place early in March in an African capital. The Sudanese individuals who negotiated with U.S. officials requested advanced supplies of military equipment and said that preparations for the coup will take place from inside Sudan. The United States would intercede at the same time militarily through a number of African countries to support that operation. The plan seeks to increase military support to the rebel forces led by John Garang in south Sudan so that they can form a third axis to encircle the al-Bashir regime. Meetings were held with certain Sudanese opposition figures abroad to incorporate them into this new plan. Earlier information showed that the Sudanese regime succeeded in the past few days in foiling a coup attempt by certain individuals supporting forces abroad.

GCC: New Secretary General Reiterates Solidarity of Members

LD2703110596 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1000 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jamil al-Hujaylan, new secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], has reiterated that the united GCC stance on Iraqi aggression has conclusively proved to the whole world that once the future, the interests, and the stability of GCC member states are threatened marginal difference are put aside as an united vision becomes paramount.

He indicated in an interview with today's AL-ANBA that the unjust Iraqi aggression against the State of Kuwait has proved that GCC member states are aware of the pivotal issue relating to their security and the future of their peoples.

Al-Hujaylan pointed out that there is no other bloc in the world that has better realistic conditions for integration than the GCC.

Al-Hujaylan praised GCC achievements since its birth in 1981. He reiterated, however, that the GCC is today an important regional bloc that carries weight in the world.

GCC: New Secretary General Interviewed on Border Issues, Iraq, Iran

MM2603162696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 26 Mar 96 p 4

[Interview with Jamil al-Hujaylan, GCC secretary general, by Muhammad al-Makki Ahmad in Doha on 25 March]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ahmad] What does your current visit to Doha mean to you?

[Al-Hujaylan] My visit to Doha, the capital of a sister Arab state and member of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], is something I have looked forward to. I am also looking forward to visiting other Arab Gulf countries which I have not previously had the chance to visit.

I have come to perform my duty of paying respect to His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin Khalifah Al Thani, amir of the State of Qatar, and to hear his wise advice and views in regard to the responsibilities laid upon me by the new post entrusted to me by the GCC leaders including His Highness Amir Shaykh Hamad Bin Khalifah Al Thani.

I have embarked on a tour during which I have had the pleasure of paying my respects to their majesties and highnesses the leaders of the GCC member countries. So it was only natural for me to conclude my tour by also visiting Doha, the capital of the sister state of Qatar, to pay my respects to Shaykh Hamad Bin Khalifah Al Thani and listen to his sound views and advice in regard to the future task I will be performing, God willing.

[Ahmad] What are your views concerning the earlier reservations made by Doha in regard to your appointment as GCC secretary general at the GCC ministerial council meeting held recently in Riyadh?

[Al-Hujaylan] I have nothing to say about this. Every GCC member country has the right to express whatever views it deems necessary. This is one of its rights of sovereignty and membership. I respect any views expressed by the GCC leaders.

[Ahmad] There are many issues awaiting you when you officially assume your duties as GCC secretary general at the beginning of next month. What are your priorities?

[Al-Hujaylan] It is difficult for me to answer this question now. Every issue under discussion by the GCC has its priority. There are also economic issues which have their priorities. Likewise, there are security and military cooperation issues too. First of all, I have to study all issues of importance to the secretariat general so that I can decide which issues takes priority over others.

[Ahmad] In this context there is the issue of the borders among the GCC member countries, which some have described as a time bomb. How do you view this matter and is there any plan for resolving it as a matter of priority?

[Al-Hujaylan] Likening this issue to a time bomb is somewhat exaggerated. As you are surely aware, the world inherited hundreds of border problems in all continents after World War II. There were border issues, not problems, that existed in the Arab region, and they have been resolved. There was a border issue between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and between them and the United Arab Emirates [UAE]. There were also border issues between it [Saudi Arabia] and Yemen, some of which have been resolved while the others are on the way to being resolved. There is some argument going on between Qatar and Bahrain too. But I believe that good will on the part of the GCC leaders and their conviction that to leave matters unresolved like this does not serve the interest of the region's people, will in the end help them to resolve these border matters, which I would not call time bombs.

[Ahmad] Some of the Gulf intelligentsia have expressed critical views of the GCC in some Gulf and Arab media and maintain that the GCC needs to consolidate its relations with the Gulf people on a wider scale. What are your views on this criticism?

[Al-Hujaylan] It would be unfair to detract from the importance of the GCC's achievements over the past 15 years. Browsing in the old GCC files, I have noted that many decisions pertaining to the life of Gulf citizens were implemented. But these matters, which affected questions of buying, selling, ownership, investment in banks, and many other fields, were not duly apparent to the citizens of the GCC member countries. The GCC citizens judge the seriousness of the GCC through simple matters that are closely linked to their lives. For example, if they have to wait an hour or an hour and a half at border posts to undergo customs formalities when traveling from one Gulf country to another, this unfortunately blurs their view of all the achievements that have been made. Hence it is essential that a news and information campaign be launched to strengthen the Gulf citizens' confidence in the GCC, which is there to serve their interests.

True, the GCC did not meet all the expectations of Gulf citizens. But it is neither fair nor helpful to claim that the GCC has accomplished nothing at all. I believe one of the GCC's top priorities in the future is to acquaint the Gulf citizens, through its own media, with all its achievements.

[Ahmad] The question of terrorism has acquired great importance in the regional and international spheres. What would you say in this respect?

[Al-Hujaylan] Terrorism is a regrettable and grave phenomenon. It should be tackled and its causes understood. I believe that if they pondered their actions those who resort to acts of terrorism would readily realize that the destabilization of conditions in their countries will have far-reaching effects and that those who resort to terrorism will in the medium to long term be the first victims of terrorism in their own countries.

[Ahmad] Do you expect measures to be taken by the Gulf countries to combat terrorism?

[Al-Hujaylan] Terrorism is undoubtedly a nightmare for the GCC member countries.

[Ahmad] How do you view the relationship with Iraq and is there any hope of opening a new chapter with it?

[Al-Hujaylan] The GCC's attitude toward Iraq has been clearly defined in the statements issued, namely that the GCC member countries care about Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. But the Baghdad regime has to comply with the resolutions of international legitimacy so that the economic embargo on it can be lifted. There are many issues connected with how serious this regime is about the dangerous weapons it has stockpiled. There is also the question of the Kuwaiti prisoners of war, who are still suffering in Iraq and whose problem has not been resolved yet. This is the general position of the GCC member countries.

With regard to the Iraqi people's suffering, nobody can claim that any Arab in the Gulf or anywhere else could condone the Iraqi people's suffering. But the question must be raised objectively, boldly, and frankly, and so we have to say that, unfortunately, the Iraqi people's suffering is due to the regime there.

[Ahmad] How do you view future relations between the GCC and Iran? Is there a new strategic outlook in respect of these relations?

[Al-Hujaylan] Iran is a major Islamic neighbor in the region. I believe that the GCC member countries are very anxious to establish better cordial and fraternal relations with it. I believe it is in Iran's interest to have cordial relations with the Gulf countries. However, Iran's persistence in its occupation of the three UAE islands and its rejection of any referral to the International Court of Justice does not serve these relations. I hope Iran will reconsider its views on this matter. Nothing could be better than the prevalence of the best possible relations between Iran, which is a major country, and the GCC member countries for the good of all their peoples.

[Ahmad] Are you optimistic about the opening of a new Gulf chapter in the field of bilateral relations?

[Al-Hujaylan] Yes, I am very optimistic.

[Ahmad] What is the basis for your optimism?

[Al-Hujaylan] It is only natural. The leaders' adoption of normal attitudes based on political will and convictions prompt me to feel optimistic. I am optimistic about a good start for productive work, God willing.

Bahrain

Bahrain: Clashes Occur at Various Schools Following Execution

NC2603141196 Paris AFP in English 1158 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Manama, March 26 (AFP)—Hundreds of young Bahrainis on Tuesday [26 March] set tires ablaze and ransacked schools south of the capital as clashes erupted with security forces after the execution of a Shiite Muslim, witnesses said.

Police fired tear gas to try to break up the protests in Sitra, a mainly Shiite area southeast of the capital where more than 300 youths denounced the government, set tires ablaze and ransacked a school, witnesses said.

Another school was ransacked in nearby Hamad town, they added.

Furniture was destroyed, windows broken and documents set on fire.

The troubles "broke out after the announcement of the execution," a resident said.

The execution of 'Isa Ahmad Hasan Qambar, 28, at dawn Tuesday was the first time the Bahraini authorities had carried out the death penalty since riots erupted in December 1994.

It is also the first time in 20 years an execution had been implemented. [passage omitted]

Bahrain: Opposition Leader al-Jamri Calls For 'Civil Disobedience'

JN2603171196 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tension prevailed in Bahrain in the wake of today's execution of 'Isa Ahmad Qambar, 28, who was sentenced for killing a policeman last year. This is the first execution in Bahrain since 1976. [passage omitted]

The Bahraini authorities do not see any political dimensions in the execution, but view it as an implementation of justice. The Bahraini opposition, however, consider the execution a political crime and do not rule out resorting to civil disobedience. This came in a statement to our radio correspondent Ahmad Birru by Dr. Mansur al-Jamri, representative of the Free Men of Bahrain Movement:

[Begin al-Jamri recording] There is a call for a mourning period in schools and markets until the end of the week. There is also a call for escalating peaceful activities, such as sit-ins and civil disobedience, which, God willing, will develop with time until our just rights are achieved. [end recording]

Bahrain: Opposition Figure on Disturbances, Bush's Remarks

NC2603201096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 26 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Dr. Mansur al-Jamri, spokesman for the Bahraini opposition, by Mahdi Hasan; place and date not given—live or recorded; from the "News and Reports" Program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] What is your comment on former U.S. President George Bush's statements in the Bahraini capital, Manama, that terrorism in Bahrain must be uprooted?

[Al-Jamri] We support him on this and urge him to uproot terrorism, the terrorizing of the Bahraini people by security forces. We support him completely and support everyone who is against terrorism. Our people are the victims of terrorism. We are living as victims of terrorism. Who are the ones who suffered in jails? Who are the ones who were killed? Who are the ones who were deprived of their sons? They are the people of Bahrain.

We fully support him and support all those who call for freedom and a dignified and noble future for all. We are against terrorism and against those who exercise terrorism, foremost of whom are the security forces commanded by foreigners and which are rife with foreigners who exercise terrorism against the Bahraini people.

[Hasan] But apparently George Bush meant the Shiites.

[Al-Jamri] Let him mean who he likes. He is playing on words as he pleases. We know, the Bahraini people know, and the world knows who the terrorist is. The terrorist is the one who terrorizes peaceful people. Let us search, investigate, and set up a fact-finding committee to seek its guidance about who terrorized whom, who tortured whom, and who killed whom.

We will certainly find out that the peaceful Muslim Bahraini people's hands have not stretched to harm any citizen, even the ruling family, and any oppressor in the past. But the oppressors' hands harmed them, tortured them, killed them, and displaced them for hundreds of years. Now the people have risen up and have become united.

Therefore, the unity of this people, both the Shiites and Sunnis, angered the oppressors who began killing them and tried to cause despair among them. They failed so they executed 'Isa Qambar, but they do not realize that they unified the people more and more and all the masks behind which they hid have fallen.

[Hasan] Dr. al-Jamri, a final question. How do you assess the international stand toward your demands from the Bahraini Government in light of the latest developments in Bahrain?

[Al-Jamri] The future is for truth. The future is for justice, the future is for those who stand by truth and justice. The world admires and adopts an honorable stand on these civilized methods, however, questions are being asked about the cycle of violence and we emphasize that we do not support violence and that it was the government that caused the violence. It is the government that wants to torture the people because it acts in a very backward mentality. It does not want to respond to fair demands, not knowing that if it fails to respond to these fair demands, it in effect harms itself before anyone else.

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We cannot stop the future. The wheel of history is rolling toward the desirable. Change is inevitably coming to the Gulf and to Bahrain. There is no other state in the Gulf doing injustice to its people like the current regime in Bahrain. There is injustice, and this injustice has started to end since December 1994. The peaceful civilian resistance will not stop until injustice ends once and for all.

[Hasan] Thanks to Dr. al-Jamri.

[Al-Jamri] Thank you.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Opposition Bulletin Criticizes Regime, Defends Expulsion

MM2603123396 London CDLR Monitor in Arabic 13 Mar 96 p 1

[Bulletin No. 90 issued by the CDLR of Saudi Arabia—received via fax]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Forward the CDLR...

Now that, thank God, the dark clouds have been dispelled and matters have been settled in the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights [CDLR, Saudi Arabia], we wish first to pray to God to make us and all the workers in the arena workers for reform on the basis of Islam.

As to your committee, the CDLR, it pledges to God in the first place and to you in the second not to be the first to enter into altercations with any Islamic faction. The arena is big enough to accommodate more than just one interpretation, and differences of opinion should not destroy amity. However, with the same clarity we wish to declare that we will not keep silent and turn the other cheek to any attempt to harm your committee. Thus your committee will continue to march forward, God willing, on the following bases:

1. Rejection of any bargaining over its basic principles, which are founded on the premise that the incumbent regime in what is known today as Saudi Arabia is an illegitimate regime that should be toppled by all possible peaceful, legitimate means.

2. Toppling the Saudi regime necessitates the mobilization and organization of the masses in struggle cadres, to make them more capable of absorbing the blows of the domineering regime.

3. The CDLR aspires to become an advanced framework for organizing the masses throughout the Arabian Peninsula, without any discrimination between one region and another.

4. While asserting its adherence to its foundation statement and the memorandum of advice, the CDLR wishes to affirm its openness to all interpretations by citizens throughout the Arabian Peninsula.

5. As much as it aspires to a positive influence over its masses, the CDLR is likewise influenced by those masses, hence its relationship with the masses will not be one of domination or control from above.

6. The CDLR belongs to all factions and vocations. We aspire to see farmers, workers, employees, students, learned men, and educated people play a role in it. The Committee aspires to represent everybody without exception.

7. For the CDLR to succeed in realizing its objectives it is necessary for the masses of the people to interact with it. For this reason we hope that our brothers inside the country will express their views and provide advice to their brothers who have opted for work within the framework of the Committee inside and outside the Arabian Peninsula.

8. The CDLR insists on pursuing a policy of complete frankness with its supporters inside the Arabian Peninsula and will adhere to the slogan of "putting all the facts before the masses."

9. The CDLR insists that it will have no dialogue or negotiation with the domineering regime in the Arabian Peninsula unless the regime accepts that such dialogue or negotiation shall be based on the contents of the Letter of Demands and Memorandum of Advice and, before that, the release of all political prisoners in the peninsula without exception.

10. The CDLR welcomes alliance with any faction, organization, or group working on the basis of Islam and the fight against the incumbent regime in the so-called Saudi Arabia, and it also aspires to form a broad front with a clear objective, namely, to topple the regime of the Saudi dynasty by peaceful and legitimate means.

With God's blessing, our march continues through the CDLR. We pray to God to accept our work for His sake and to guide our steps along the road of reason and endow us with victory from Him, "for victory comes only from God, the mighty and wise." [Koranic verse]

Leisure Travel

The Saudi and mercenary press flashed the news of the dispute that arose within the ranks of the CDLR on their front pages, highlighted it, and raised a clamor about it in the usual manner of the oil-riyal mercenaries in misty Albion's capital. They went about sniffing for details and grabbing scoops as part of their acrobatic services

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to pander to the barbarous attitudes and low instincts of the ruler and the ruled.

In fact, the Saudi riyal arrives in Britain as a hot currency, to melt the frost and cultivate the flesh of the regime's greedy children, and all a thief need do is to reach out his hand and take what he wants. The cold is severe and there are hungry mouths to feed, yet the Saudi dynasty's coffers are as lavish as ever in spending on the drum-beaters and the charlatans hoping falsely to achieve their aims.

In the era of the Sudayris [ruling branch of the Saudi dynasty] the "pop music" alliance seems good for nothing but getting into fights and keeping its mouth shut. All that remains is a story about a drunkard being helped home by a group of junkies, and the junkies have yet to be found.

Because the question of conflict within the CDLR has arisen, and because the CDLR has no room for drunkards or mercenaries, it is incumbent on us not to allow the drunkard to divide us and to stone the mercenaries into silence. Because the nation is the purpose of all our work, and we wish to reassure the nation that the conflict will end in healthy and positive results which it will shortly witness, Almighty God willing. We shall continue to pursue our objectives and our programs unperturbed by the stories the fabricators have worked hard to disseminate and broadcast and by all the talk that we are drawing our last breath.

In compliance with our belief in the nation's right to know about all matters, we wish to put forward the following clarifications:

1. The CDLR would not have resorted to taking a decision such as that to expel Dr. Sa'd al-Faqih had it not been for the fact that Al-Faqih's basic program contradicted the basic objective of the legitimate action to which the CDLR had pledged to the nation that it will adhere.

2. The CDLR's decision to expel Dr. Al-Faqih was prompted by the conditions and needs of the present stage, which does not permit under any circumstances anything that would affect the CDLR's course or the nature of its work against the domineering and frail Saudi regime.

3. When matters reach a stage when they begin to have a negative effect on the nature and the legitimately sought objectives of the work, and when it begins to have negative repercussions, then it is necessary to stop and draw breath, carry out reform, and remedy collective flaws that have developed so that it is possible to complete the march.

4. Sincere consultations and good offices have been pursued to end the conflict within the CDLR so that it does not seep out to non-Islamic circles. These consultations and good offices have led us to make concessions in which we did not believe but which we made purely in order to resolve the conflict and end the crisis.

We wish to affirm here that matters have now settled down and that our work is continuing according to the CDLR's established programs and plans. God willing, it will be possible for us to draw the carpet from under the feet of the gloaters and the regime's lackeys.

"And God turned back the unbelievers for all their fury: No advantage did they gain; and God is sufficient for Believers in their fight. And God is full of strength, able to enforce His will." [Koranic verse]

News of Arrests

The Bureau of Investigation authorities have arrested Shaykh Nasir al-Lahham, imam of a mosque at Umm-al-Hammam in Riyadh. Shaykh Nasir is a well-known sheikhs and enjoys great popularity among the youth. He is said to have been arrested for praying for the detainees at late-night prayers.

The apparatus of suppression and intelligence in the Eastern Region arrested 'Ahmad Tamam al-Hajiri because he dared to argue with some young members of the Al-Jamiyah faction. Shaykh 'Aqil Sulayman al-Raji was also arrested after one spiteful officer tried to trick him in a vile manner. "Usamah Anderqini, 'Ayman Ghurab, 'Ali Khurays al-'Utaybi, Hamdan Dayfallah al-'Utabyi, 'Ali Al-Shafi'i, 'Atiyah al-Harithi and 'Abdallah al-Harithi have also been arrested.

Wholesale Trials

The Grand Court in Riyadh has sentenced 15 youths to terms of imprisonment of between two and seven years because they said prayers for the soul of martyr 'Abdallah al-Hasif, may God have mercy on him, and were accused of renting an apartment to use for the distribution of statements and leaflets issued by Shaykh Muhammad al-Mis'ari.

Security Under Saudi Dynasty

A new type of crime has spread in the town of Khamis Mushayt, namely strangling old women until they die in order to rob them. One such victim was the aunt of well-known merchant 'Ali Ibn Hayf.

Multiple Usury

The international Visa Company has reported that the Saudi credit card holders spent about 1 billion U.S.

dollars in 1995, an average of $238 per card compared to the average expenditure by card holders in Britain of only $60 per credit card.

Thus the citizen in the Arabian Peninsula suffers from credit debts of usurious magnitude, with interest exceeding 20 percent.

Hence one can only ask: Having sold out the country wholesale, has the Saudi dynasty government now begun to sell its citizens through retail trade.

Al-Mis'ari, Portillo

The CDLR has received a flood of congratulations since its official spokesman, Dr. Muhammad al-Mis'ari, won his case against the [British] Home Office when a judge responsible for immigration and asylum cases decided to annul the British Government's decision to deport him. The judge directed the Home Secretary to consider granting him the full right to political asylum within a month.

On the other hand, [Saudi Defense Minister] Sultan and [Saudi Prime Minister] 'Abdallah have discussed the case of Al-Mis'ari's presence in Britain with British Defence Secretary Portillo, who visited Riyadh on 10 March.

AFP reports that Portillo told them that Britain did not wish to keep Al-Mis'ari in its territory but that the Government's attempt to deport him had met with abject failure. The two princes, however, had impressed on Portillo the need for Britain not to permit anyone to affect Saudi-British relations in a negative way.

Announcements

1. The CDLR issued a statement on 14 Shawwal 1416 of the Hegira, corresponding to 4 March 1996 AD, expelling Dr. Sa'd Ibn Rashid al-Faqih from membership and relieving him of his post as chief of its London Bureau, and appointing Shaykh Kassab Ibn 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Rashid al-'Utaybi as his successor in the post of London Bureau chief. This decision won the support of His Eminence Shaykh 'Abdallah Ibn Sulayman al-Mis'ari, founder and president of the CDLR, in a statement that he issued on 17 Shawwal 1416 of the Hegira [7 March 1996]. It also won the support of the Shura Council as expressed in its decision on the same day.

2. The CDLR regrets the delay in issuing this Bulletin No. 90 owing to the seizure of the bureau by an unauthorized group and their publication of a false statement No. 44 as well as an unauthorized issue of AL-HUQUQ under the number 90. The Bulletin will continue to be published as usual every Tuesday evening.

Saudi Arabia: Mediation Group Announces 'Agreement' Between CDLR Sides

MM2703085696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 23 Mar 96 pp 1, 6

[Unattributed report: "Will al-Mas'ari and al-Faqih Stay Clear of the 'Diabolical Pitfalls'?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — The mediation committee which for the last two weeks has tried to contain the disagreements within the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights [in Saudi Arabia, CDLR], announced yesterday that its efforts have resulted in a binding agreement for Dr. Muhammad al-Mas'ari and Dr. Sa'd al-Faqih to stop making any statements on the nature of the split in the CDLR, which has resulted in two separate organizations, one led by al-Mas'ari under the old CDLR name, and the other led by al-Faqih and called the Islamic Reform Movement.

The statement, of which AL-HAYAH has received a copy by telephone, comes at a time when al-Mas'ari has circulated a statement in English announcing al-Faqih's expulsion and listing "a series of complaints" leading to his expulsion. However, one of the mediation committee members refused to consider this statement a breach of the bilateral agreement, saying that "it is only a clarification of the positions announced over the last few days."

The mediation committee said that "it has succeeded in its mediation efforts" between al-Mas'ari and al-Faqih "who have vowed to stay clear of the diabolical pitfalls, refrain from breaching any of the terms of the agreement, refrain from making any statement to the press...and deny the opportunists and laymen any opportunity to come between them and leak information and lies."

The committee thanked al-Mas'ari and al-Faqih for cooperating with it, but said that "it regrets the slander by tendentious sides and opportunists for personal gain." It also warned that "should either side breach the agreement, this does not necessarily mean that the other side should also breach it. If any excesses are committed by either side, the committee will try to clarify matters for all Muslims."

Sources close to the committee said in a statement to AL-HAYAH that the committee would react in a negative way toward any side that breaches the agreement on not starting altercations, and that it would circulate all information in its possession "in order to put things in the correct perspective."

It should be mentioned that the mediation committee is made up of two Islamic figures, namely Abu-'Ammar and Abu-Sudrah. Abu-'Ammar told AL-HAYAH that the committee undertook the mediation as a personal initiative and with the agreement of the sides concerned.

In separate statements, al-Faqih, al-Mas'ari, and Abu-'Ammar confirmed that the statement was issued in English. While al-Faqih and al-Mas'ari refused to make any statements on the issue, Abu-'Ammar told AL-HAYAH that the objective is to give the foreign media a clear picture and, once and for all, close the file on the problem between the two sides.

The statement, of which AL-HAYAH has obtained a copy, effectively reiterates the accusations directed by al-Mas'ari at al-Faqih, such as "betraying many of the CDLR's activists" and "harming the CDLR's members."

Saudi Arabia: Mediators in CDLR Split Said Angered by al-Mas'ari Statement

MM2603151996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 26 Mar 96 pp 1, 6

[Unattributed report: "Al-Mas'ari's Positions Anger Mediation Committee"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — AL-HAYAH has learned from informed sources in the British capital that the statement in English issued last Thursday [21 March] by Dr. Muhammad al-Mas'ari, who leads one of the sides of the recent split in the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights [CDLR], has angered the circles trying to put an end to the media campaigns and altercations which erupted some two weeks ago between him and Dr. Sa'd al-Faqih, who broke away to form a different organization which he called the Islamic Reform Committee.

The sources said that the statement, circulated last Thursday and Friday to the foreign and Arab media, astounded the mediation committee, which at the time was busy preparing the closing statement for its attempts at ending the campaigns between al-Mas'ari and al-Faqih and had also "urged them not to make any statements to the media regarding the disagreement."

On Sunday, more than 24 hours before it was circulated to the media, AL-HAYAH published the main points of the mediation committee's statement. However, it should be mentioned here that AL-HAYAH made an unintentional error when it attributed to mediation committee member Abu-'Ammar some remarks he did not make, which in fact belonged to Dr. al-Mas'ari. AL-HAYAH's report said: "While al-Faqih and al-Mas'ari have refused to make any statements on the issue (the statement), Abu-'Ammar told AL-HAYAH that the objective is to give the foreign media a clear picture and, once and for all, close the file of the problem between the two sides." These remarks were in fact made by al-Mas'ari, to justify the statement's publication in English at this very time, and have nothing to do with Abu-Ammar's position.

Abu-'Ammar refused yesterday to make any statements when AL-HAYAH contacted him, and so did Dr. al-Faqih, who stressed that he is still abiding by the agreement reached by the mediation committee to end the campaigns against the other side. However, some informed sources told AL-HAYAH that the mediation committee is "very angry at al-Mas'ari's recent statement and his repeated breaches of the bilateral agreement, and that this statement has put it in a very embarrassing situation in view of the fact that the English statement reiterating the previous accusations against al-Faqih was circulated on the same afternoon that the mediation committee was preparing its closing statement to announce an amicable split between the two sides of the dispute."

The sources added that "the timing of the publication of al-Mas'ari's statement was intended to show that the mediation committee was too hasty in issuing its conciliatory statement, and that the committee would agree to keep quiet about the breaches to the al-Mas'ari-al-Faqih agreement with regard to the final separation and the handover of equipment and property and so on."

The sources added that what "annoyed" the mediation committee most is the fact that Dr. al-Mas'ari and his entourage have continued to distribute the statement isued by 'Abdallah al-Mas'ari (Muhammad's father at the beginning of the quarrel announcing al-Faqih's expulsion from the CDLR, bearing in mind that al-Mas'ari senior reissued another conciliatory statement, "a copy" of the first statement, which was the main item on the mediation committee's agenda for ending the deterioration of the situation between the two sides to the split.

Meanwhile, in a telephone conversation with AL-HAYAH, Kassab al-'Utaybi, the CDLR London office director, said that the statement "was ready for circulation almost one week before it was circulated. It is addressed to the Western media, which wants to know what is happening in the CDLR. Its circulation at this particular time is due to some technical problems from which the office was suffering after the recent split."

Al-'Utaybi rejected the view that this statement is a breach of the agreement reached by the mediation committee, adding: "There is no new campaign against al-Faqih. We only wanted to address the Western media.

Al-Faqih's group are minding their own business, and so are we."

Saudi Arabia: CDLR on 'Collusion With Israel,' Status of Magazine

MM2703101596

[FBIS Report] London CDLR Monitor in Arabic Bulletin No. 92 of 27 March 1996, received by fax on 27 March, is entitled "Al Sa'ud and Concealed Conspiracy."

The 2,000-word bulletin is devoted chiefly to the historical background to the Palestinian issue. The bulletin also says that the Saudi regime's "disgraceful step represented in its participation in the peacemakers summit in Sharm al-Shaykh and the shameful handshake" between the Saudi foreign minister and the Israeli prime minister "reveals beyond doubt the Saudi regime's collusion with Israel in preparation for full normalization at all levels, political, economic, and cultural."

Under the subhead "Notification and Clarification," the bulletin says: "We would like to inform all supporters of the Committee [for the Defense of Legitimate Rights] that AL-SHAR'IYAH magazine was under the responsibility of its former chief editor [Sa'd al-Faqih]. That person was unwilling to allow the Committee to review its contents, especially those of the latest issue, which the members saw only after its delivery from the printing house. Thus the Committee is not responsible for the magazine's content, especially those of the latest issue."

Bureau has not yet received the issue of AL-SHAR'IYAH in question.

Iraq: Motives, Plans of Latest Defector al-Khazraji Viewed

JN2603142496 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 25 Mar 96 pp 1, 11

[FBIS Translated Text] Staff Lieutenant General Nizar al-Khazraji, the former Iraqi chief of staff who arrived in Jordan from Turkey on 21 March, decided to escape Iraq after the killings of Husayn Kamil and his brothers three days after Kamil returned to Baghdad from Amman.

It seems that al-Khazraji, one of thousands of retired officers, was conspiring with Husayn Kamil. His escape from Baghdad was made against this backdrop and after he learned that Kamil had been subjected to a 48-hour videotaped military interrogation after he returned to Baghdad from Amman.

An informed Iraqi source told AL-MAJD that al-Khazraji annihilated thousands of members of his Shiite sect during the uprising in southern Iraq in 1991. He sought help from the U.S. forces in "Kurdish" northern Iraq to escape to Turkey en route to Jordan, where the opposition Iraqi National Accord Movement is based.

The source added that al-Khazraji's escape, preceded by the defection of Husayn Kamil and Wafiq al-Samarra'i, head of the Iraqi Intelligence, shows that Saddam is in control of the Iraqi Army. If these defectors had enjoyed real influence within the Iraqi military establishment, they could have toppled the regime instead of defecting.

Iraqi opposition members, some of whom met al-Khazraji at Amman Airport and took him to a villa in an Amman suburb, welcomed his joining their ranks and considered his escape from Baghdad a sign of support.

In a statement sent to AL-MAJD, the Iraqi opposition said the defection of al-Khazraji, who was granted a residence permit and not political asylum in Jordan, will inspire the Iraqi people and Army to escalate the struggle to eliminate the Baghdad regime.

Responsible Iraqi sources told AL-MAJD that al-Khazraji's defection was made against the backdrop of a failed coup attempt he had planned with a number of Army and Republican Guard officers and opponents of the regime.

The sources said al-Khazraji, who belongs to the Bani Lam tribe in Babil, contacted Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti from Turkey. Al-Kabariti told al-Khazraji that Jordan would accept him.

The opposition sources said the Jordanian Government intervened at the last minute to prevent al-Khazraji from holding a news conference in which he was to discuss the motives for his defection and his plan for change. According to AFP, however, al-Khazraji said he will hold a news conference at a later date.

Political observers in Amman told AL-MAJD that the Jordanian Government does not want to spend the political capital gained from al-Khazraji's defection on news conferences and interviews. This position was confirmed by the intensive meetings held with al-Khazraji and various quarters to confirm his shrewdness and military experience.

Meanwhile, an Iraqi opposition source told AL-MAJD that al-Khazraji has met frequently with Jordanian Government officials. The contents of these meetings have not been disclosed. The source said whether al-Khazraji will stay in Jordan or not was not discussed at the meetings.

Alluding to the statement by the National Accord that was published in a daily newspaper, the source said al-Khazraji contacted former military commanders in the Republican Guard, but had not contacted any of the opposition movements that are operating in Jordan. The source said al-Khazraji's contacts were restricted to the Jordanian Government, and the opposition parties should not use this event to serve their own interests.

AL-MAJD learned that al-Khazraji arrived in Mosul on 19 March to participate in the Nowruz celebrations in northern Iraq. His family and wife arrived in Amman six months ago, but he waited for the chance to escape Iraq, which came during the Nowruz celebrations.

Al-Khazraji is a former member of the Military Bureau of the Ba'th Party. He was sacked on 3 August 1990, a day after the Iraqi forces entered Kuwait. He remained suspended and held no post for six years.

On 3 March 1991, he was shot in the thigh in al-Nasiriyah and stayed at the house of a ranking tribal chieftain for three days.

Iraq: Clashes Involving Tariq 'Aziz Family Reportedly Leaves 1 Dead

NC2603162296 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to news reports, clashes recently broke out between the family of Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz and the family of Shawkat Jawhar, a prominent member of the Ba'th Party and the intelligence service. The clashes were prompted by a dispute between the two families over their common agricultural land. Sources said that the armed clashes left one person dead.

Iraq: 200 Citizens Reportedly Killed With Husayn Kamil

NC2603162996 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to a reliable news report from Baghdad, some 200 citizens were killed during the murder of Husayn Kamil and the members of his family when fierce clashes broke out between the 'Aflaqite regime men and Husayn Kamil's supporters. The reliable report restated that the two sons of Husayn Kamil and Saddam Kamil were also killed during the clashes.

Iraq: Letter to Arab League Protests Overflight 'Violations'

JN2603202296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1000 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (INA) — Iraq today strongly protested the continued violation of its airspace by U.S., British, and French warplanes based in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

In a letter to the Arab League secretary general, Iraq said that between 1 and 15 March, U.S., British, and French warplanes conducted 779 sorties at various altitudes. The letter urged the Arab League secretary general to intervene with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and stop these violations, which contravene the Arab League Charter, the Arab Joint Defense Pact, the UN Charter, and international law.

The letter stressed that Iraq holds Saudi Arabia and Kuwait fully responsible for the damage caused by these actions and for the security, economic, and political threats. The letter states that Iraq has the legal right to seek compensation for material and moral damage to the people of Iraq, in accordance with the principle of international responsibility.

Iraq: Saddam Chairs Leadership Meeting To Assess Election Results

JN2603210896 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2020 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 26 Mar (INA) — President Saddam Husayn presided over a joint meeting of the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and the Iraq Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party.

The conferees assessed the results of the fourth National Assembly elections. The RCC and the Iraq Command expressed their satisfaction with the results, which underscored the awareness of our great people and their firm faith in the democratic march entrenched by President Saddam Husayn.

Ahmad Husayn, chief of the presidential office, attended the meeting.

Israel: 'Special Center' Set Up for Transport of Goods Into Gaza

TA2703101396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Since this morning, the District Liaison and Coordination Office at the Erez checkpoint has been operating a special center to coordinate the entry and exit of goods to and from the Gaza Strip.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the center is headed by Colonel Dov Tzedaqa, and includes representatives from the Agriculture Ministry, the Industry and Trade Ministry, and the security forces. It is designed to facilitate the flow of goods, especially through the Qarni and Erez checkpoints. The center was set up to handle the large flow of foodstuffs and basic products into the Gaza Strip. Security officials stressed that the transport of goods to and from the Gaza Strip would only be permitted after prior coordination with the center.

Israel: Peres Appoints IDF Ombudsman To Probe POW Affairs

TA2603160696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has appointed Reserves Major General Aharon Doron to investigate the affairs involving attacks on Israeli and Egyptian POW's in the course of the wars waged by the two countries. Gen. Doron is the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] ombudsman.

The Egyptian Government has been notified of Gen. Doron's appointment.

Israel: Labor Announces Winners of Primaries Elections

TA2603184396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The announcement of the complete results of the Labor primaries shows that nearly 195,000 voters — 70 percent of registered Labor members — participated in the election. It was a record number in Labor history.

There are 16 new names and six women on the list: Dalya Itzik, Ora Namir, Ya'el Dayan, Nadia Hilu [an Arab woman from Yafo], 'Ofra Friedman, and Ora Hakham.

Yitzhaq Herzog, chairman of the Labor primaries committee, announced the Labor list for the next Knesset at Labor headquarters in Tel Aviv a short while ago: Shim'on Peres, 'Uzi Bar'am, Ehud Baraq, Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer, Hayim Ramon, and Avraham Shohat. The reserved seventh slot is occupied by Labor Secretary General Nisim Zvili. He is followed by Efrayim Sne. Dalya Itzik is in the ninth slot, reserved for women. She is followed by Ori Or, Yosi Beilin, and Shevah Weiss. Rafi Elul won the 13th slot, reserved for the Central District winner. Rafi Edri, who came in first in the Sharon-Samaria District, is in the 14th slot. He is followed by Hagay Merom.

The next five slots, which were reserved for districts, minorities, women, and kibbutzim, are occupied by Yosi Katz, Nawaf Musaliha, Ora Namir, Eli Ben-Menahem, and Eli Goldschmidt.

David Liba'i is 21st, followed by Ra'anan Kohen from the Dan District, 'Amir Peretz from the Southern District, and Moshe Shahal in the 24th slot.

The next nine slots were also reserved. Ofir Pines is the 25th, followed by Shalom Simhon, Ya'el Dayan, Mikha Goldman, Adiso Masala [an Ethiopian], Salih Tarif, Avi Yehezqel, Yona Yahav, and Efrayim Hosha'ya. Prof. Shlomo Ben-'Ami is in the 34th slot, followed by the following candidates in reserved slots: Eytan Kabel from the Dan District; Rafiq Hajj Yahya; Nadia Hilu; Ron Hulda'i, who came in second in Tel Aviv; Tzali Reshef [Peace Now leader], second in Jerusalem; and 'Ofra Friedman in the 40th slot, reserved for women from the districts.

Next on the list are Eytan Broshi, Shim'on Shetrit in the 42d slot, Shiri Weizman from the Southern District, and Ora Hakham in another slot reserved for women from the districts.

Israel: Initial Results of Likud Primaries Detailed

TA2703061196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0450 GMT 27 Mar 96

[Report by political correspondent Yaron Deqel]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Here is the updated Likud-Gesher-Tzomet list for the upcoming Knesset elections. In the first slot is Binyamin Netanyahu, followed by David Levi, the head of the Gesher movement. Tzomet leader Refa'el Eytan is in the third slot, followed by Yitzhaq Mordekhay, Ari'el Sharon, Moshe Qatzav, Beni Begin, Eli'ezer Sandberg from Tzomet, David Magen from Gesher, and Dan Meridor in the 10th slot. Ehud Olmert is No. 11, followed by Tzahi Hanegbi, 'Uzi Landau, and Maxim Levi from Gesher in the 14th slot. Hayim Dayan from Tzomet has the 15th slot, followed by Limor Livnat, Mikha'el Eytan, and Silvan Shalom. Gid'on 'Ezra, the former deputy head of the Shin Bet is in the 19th slot on the joint Likud-Gesher-Tzomet list. Moshe Peled from Tzomet

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is No. 20, Mikha'el Kleiner from Gesher is No. 21, followed by Me'ir Shitrit, Eliyahu Ben-Elisar, Dan Tikhon, and No'omi Blumenthal. Yehoshu'a Matza', representing the Likud's Jerusalem District, is in the No. 26 position. Avraham Herschson is No. 27, followed by David Re'em from the Haifa District, Ze'ev Boim from the Negev District, and Gesher's Yehuda Lankry in the 30th position. Tzomet's Pini Badash is No. 31, Sha'ul 'Amor, representing the Galilee and the Valleys is No. 32. Re'uven Rivlin is returning to the Knesset at No. 33, Ron Nahman from Judaea and Samaria is No. 34, and Yisra'el Katz, representing the moshavim is No. 35. Tzomet's Doron Shmu'eli is No. 36, followed by Moti Mish'ani from Gesher, 'Ovadya 'Eli, Ashdod Mayor Tzvi Tzilker, and Hod Hasharon Mayor 'Ezra Binyamini at No. 40. Gesher's Ya'aqov Bardugo is No. 41, followed by Tzomet's Nehama Ronen. The coastal plain's representative in the No. 43 slot has not been decided yet, and Eli Landau and Dr. Yosi Olmert are still vying for the position. Dov Shilansky is No. 44, and Yuliy Koshorovsky closes the list at No. 45. Former Knesset members who did not make the list are Ya'aqov Ahime'ir, David Mena', As'ad As'ad, Ya'aqov Shamay, Ester Salmovitz, and Mikha'el Ratzon.

Israel: Court Convicts 'Amir of Rabin Murder

TA2703073196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yig'al 'Amir has been convicted of the murder of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and of wounding the prime minister's bodyguard under aggravating circumstances. The Tel Aviv District Court will hand down the sentence at 1130 [0830 GMT].

Addressing the court at the end of the hearing, 'Amir expressed no remorse for his actions, declaring that he had acted in the name of God, the Israeli people, and Eretz Yisra'el. 'Amir claimed that he was forced to perpetrate the deed, which contravenes everything he believes in, because otherwise, the damage would have been irreversible. 'Amir claimed that Israel was already feeling this damage.

In his concluding address, presiding Judge Edmond Levi said that with amazing cool-headed premeditation, 'Amir decided that killing the prime minister was the only way to stop the political process he opposed. The court ruled that there should be no reduction of 'Amir's sentence because all the psychiatric evaluations had ruled that the defendant was neither psychologically nor mentally deficient.

The prosecutor asked the court to impose the mandatory life sentence on the defendant, as well as an additional six-year prison term for wounding Rabin's bodyguard. 'Amir's attorney asked the court to sentence the defendant to overlapping, not consecutive prison terms. The defense attorney said it was clear that the Israeli president would never reduce 'Amir's sentence. 'Amir's attorney said that he would appeal the sentence.

The court is scheduled to reconvene in approximately 90 minutes to hand down Yig'al 'Amir's sentence.

Israel: Court Sentences 'Amir to Life Imprisonment Plus 6 Years

TA2703101896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Tel Aviv District Court sentenced Yig'al 'Amir to life imprisonment for the murder of late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. The court also gave 'Amir an additional six-year prison term for wounding Rabin's bodyguard Yoram Rabin under aggravating circumstances. The sentence is cumulative.

Yig'al 'Amir was taken from the courtroom immediately after the verdict was read. He will be able to appeal the sentence to the Supreme Court within 45 days. [passage omitted]

Israel: 20 Percent of SLA Claimed To Recently Defect to Hizballah

TA2603145396 'Ofra NEQUDA in Hebrew Mar 96 p 24

[FBIS Translated Text] Some 20 percent of SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldiers have defected in recent weeks, most of them joining Hizballah. It is mostly Sunni Muslim but also Druze soldiers who defected. Some of them have already managed to take part in attacks against the SLA and IDF [Israel Defense Forces]. This phenomenon is very worrisome to IDF officers in the Northern Command. About half of the defectors actively joined Hizballah terrorist ranks, some of them serving as trainers. The rest of the defectors left for northern Lebanon.

The phenomenon first emerged in the wake of a debriefing conducted by the IDF following a Hizballah attack on an SLA post. An analysis of the Hizballah assault clearly indicated that the assailants were aided by inside information and possessed specifics on the location of positions inside the post and of defensive techniques. The SLA soldiers come from south Lebanese villages, as follows: 50 percent are Christians; 30 percent Shiites; 15 percent Druze; and the rest Sunni Muslims who make up most of the defectors.

Information about defection from the SLA ranks and aid to Hizballah may explain some of the surprising successes of Hizballah attacks, including on camouflaged

convoys that could not have been visible or known to them at all.

The defense establishment is very concerned about the phenomenon, and looking for ways to curb it. Security experts believe that the SLA soldiers' defection is influenced by developments in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza, and the fate of the Arab collaborators who were abandoned by Israel. The SLA soldiers are afraid that sooner or later, in the framework of a political arrangement with Syria and Lebanon, Israel will desert them too.

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Jordan: Article Details Expulsion of Iraqi, Jordanian Envoys

JN2603140396 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 26 Mar 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by P.V. Vivekananad]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Amman—Jordan said Monday [25 March] it had expelled an Iraqi diplomat and Baghdad, in apparent retaliation, had ordered the expulsion of an administrator at the Kingdom's embassy in the Iraqi capital.

The diplomatic flare-up was the latest twist to Jordanian-Iraqi political relations which have been deteriorating in the wake of Jordanian criticism of the policies of the Baghdad regime and calls for an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people resulting from those policies.

Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, addressing a weekly press briefing, said Jordan ordered the expulsion of the assistant press attache at the Iraqi embassy in Amman after finding the diplomat was "engaged in activities non-compatible with his diplomatic status."

The expulsion order was served five days ago, and the diplomat, identified as Husayn Faraj Khalaf, has already left Jordan, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said.

In apparent retaliation, Baghdad ordered out Ra'id Hamuri, an administrator at the Jordanian embassy in the Iraqi capital, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said. Mr. Hammuri has not arrived back in Amman, he said. The minister was informed of the Iraqi move half-way through the press briefing.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir, obviously seeking to maintain the unwritten protocol against revealing precise reasons for diplomatic expulsions, declined to be specific on how the Iraqi attache had violated his diplomatic status.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir played down suggestions that the expulsions would further strain the ties between Jordan and Iraq. "We should not give the matter more attention that it deserves," he said. "This happens between countries."

It was the first time that Jordan expelled a diplomat from the Iraqi embassy, where the number of accredited diplomats now stands at 22.

Jordan has three accredited diplomats in Baghdad, including Ambassador Bassam Qaqish, in addition to administrative staff.

Reports alleged late last year that Jordan had asked the Iraqi embassy here to reduce the number of diplomats at the mission, but government officials denied the reports.

It is the second time in five months that Jordan expelled a foreign diplomat. In November, the government declared Iranian diplomat Saed Batni persona non grata for "activities incompatible with his diplomatic status." Tehran retaliated by expelling a Jordanian administrator at the Kingdom's embassy in the Iranian capital.

Jordanian-Iraqi political ties plunged sharply after the Kingdom offered shelter to Husayn Kamil and his brother Saddam Kamil, both sons-in-law of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, and their families following their defection to Jordan in August last year.

The gap was widened when Husayn Kamil, at a 12 August press conference in Amman, called for the overthrow of the Iraqi regime, and Iraq described as interference in its internal affairs Jordan's criticism of Baghdad's internal and external policies and the Kingdom's calls for an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of those policies. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Al-Mu'ashshir on Diplomat's Expulsion, Peace, Palestinians

JN2603123896 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 26 Mar 96 p 37

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said the Jordanian Government expelled Husayn Faraj, an Iraqi diplomat who works as an assistant to the press counselor at the Iraqi Embassy. The government declared Faraj persona non grata for carrying out activities incompatible with diplomatic norms.

The information minister said the Jordanian Government has no knowledge whether the Jordanian ambassador to Iraq is being harassed by the Iraqi Government. He added: We should not read too much into the expulsion of the Iraqi diplomat. This does not happen only between Iraq and Jordan. Any Arab or foreign country may expel a diplomat anytime it deems this action warranted.

At a press briefing yesterday afternoon, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said the Jordanian Government does not plan to set up camps for Iraqis on the Jordanian border. There is no need for setting up such camps.

Commenting on the peace process in the region, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said: Jordan supports the Arab-Israeli peace process on all tracks. His Majesty King Husayn asserts this in all his meetings.

Al-Mu'ashshir added: In his speech to the closed session at Sharm al-Shaykh, which was attended only by heads of state and chief delegates, His Majesty King Husayn stressed that Jordan wants peace achieved on all tracks,

particularly the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. We should not only support the Palestinian-Israeli track, the king said.

Al-Mu'ashshir added: His Majesty King Husayn said at the summit that the summit must not be devoted only to fighting terrorism. The summit should also support peace on all tracks.

Commenting further on the peace process, al-Mu'ashshir said: On the sidelines of the Arab foreign ministers' meeting in Cairo following the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, the prime minister met with the Syrian foreign minister, who told him that Syria was not against the summit but that it thought the summit was held hastily and would be devoted only to fighting terrorism. Faruq al-Shar' told al-Kabariti Syria supports the peace option and the peace process in the region.

The information minister said the experts committee that emanated from the Sharm al-Shaykh summit will meet in Washington on 28 March to follow up on the recommendations of the summit. Therefore, one cannot say that the summit produced negative results and judge it to be a failure.

On the Jordanian attitude toward the Palestinians, al-Mu'ashshir said: Jordan supports the Palestinian brothers to achieve all their demands. The Jordanian-Palestinian relationship is special and no one has the right to practice one-upmanship in this context. He added that Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, asked Prime Minister al-Kabariti to intervene with Israel to lift its collective punishment against the Palestinians and end their suffering.

The information minister added: Jordan is not pleased with the collective punishment imposed by Israel on the self-rule region. This will obstruct the peace process.

Commenting on the Jordanian option proposed by Likud Party leader Binyamin Netanyahu on re-annexing the West Bank to Jordan, al-Mu'ashshir said: After its decision to disengage ties with the West Bank, Jordan thinks that the Palestinians alone are the ones to decide the type of any relationship with Jordan or any other Arab country.

Al-Mu'ashshir added: The Palestinian Authority is currently calling for confederation with Jordan. However, Jordan rejects this until all the occupied Arab territories are returned to the Palestinian state so the Palestinian people can make the appropriate decision on confederation or any other form of relationship.

The information minister said the Jordanian meetings with Israeli party leaders have nothing to do with the Jordanian option proposed by the Likud Party. These meetings are meant for consultations on different issues in Israel. Jordan categorically rejects the option of returning Jordanian rule to the West Bank and absolutely refuses to discuss it. Jordan is a sovereign country that has borders. It has no political ambitions in the region. [passage omitted]

The information minister declined to comment on the parliamentary elections in Iraq, saying this is an internal affair and no one should interfere in it. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Central Bank Lifts Ban on Iraqi Currency

JN2703113996 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 27 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Nasir 'Arif]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Central Bank of Jordan [CBJ] decided not to ban Iraqi currency from being brought into and taken out of the kingdom. It also decided to cancel previous circulars issued in this regard in 1993.

In an official circular distributed to various quarters at border checkpoints, airports, and the Port of al-'Aqabah, CBJ Governor Ziyad Fariz, says that the bank does not ban all units of Iraqi currency from being brought into and taken out of the kingdom and from being dealt with like any other foreign currency. Fariz says that all previous CBJ circulars banning this currency from being brought into or taken out of the kingdom have been canceled. [passage omitted]

Jordan: MB Leader Rejects 'Terrorism,' Supports Hamas, 'Resistance'

JN2703082396 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 26 Mar 96 p 16

[FBIS Translated Text] His Eminence 'Abd-al-Majid al-Dhunaybat, controller general of the Muslim Brotherhood [MB] in Jordan, said that limited arrests of MB members have not stopped; however, the number of these arrests have varied from time to time. He added that the current arrests are not launched on a wide scale. In an interview with AL-SABIL, al-Dhunaybat expressed hope that these arrests will stop because their continuation will cause tension in this country.

The MB controller general added that all Muslims throughout the world support Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Jihad movements. He said that no Muslim agrees on harming Hamas or any other Jihad movement, noting that the attack on the Islamic movements, including Hamas, and continuing the fight against Islam provoke millions of believers in Islam as a doctrine, shari'ah, way of life, and a path toward awakening and prosperity.

Al-Dhunaybat expressed his disapproval of the practices of the Palestinian self-rule authority which are considered complementary to the Zionist enemy measures and which are cruel and rigid. He added that this confirms the MB's understanding of the Oslo accords and its rejection of these accords.

Regarding the MB's stand on the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, al-Dhunaybat said that the conference convened to support the state of the Jewish enemy and to assert its hegemony in the region and its influence in the world. He added that Arab participation gave the conference regional legitimacy and influence. He said: As we reject terrorism we assert people's right to resistance and liberation and reject attempts to distort the values of jihad and martyrdom and to legitimize aggression and usurpation. He said: We believe in the need to keep civilians as far as possible from the conflict, but the Zionist enemy established his usurped entity on the corpses of old men, children, and women through organized massacres. He added that the enemy insists on involving civilians in the conflict by rejecting Hamas' calls and proposals for reaching a truce in exchange for stopping aggression against civilians. The MB controller general asserted that the Islamic movement and nation are harmed by international terrorism more than others.

Al-Dhunaybat criticized the government's intention to raise the price of bread, which is a basic need for citizens. He said that this is considered a red line in the supply policies of all governments in the world, noting that no Jordanian Government has dared to make such a decision.

Jordan: Likud Leader To Be Flown in for Peace Process Talks

MM2603155596 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 26 Mar 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Jordanian Aircraft To Fly Likud Leader to Amman To Discuss Peace Process"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Informed sources in Amman have said that the Jordanian Government has today decided to send a Jordanian civilian aircraft to Israel's Ben Gurion airport to fly Israeli opposition leader Binyamin Netanyahu to Amman to discuss with Crown Prince Hasan and Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti the developments in the region and the way that Likud, led by Netanyahu, will handle the peace process should it win the Israeli parliamentary elections to be held next May. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Crown Prince Hasan Receives Israeli Likud Leader Netanyahu

JN2603200796 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 26 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the regent, continued his meetings with various members of the Israeli political scene and representatives from the Israeli executive, judiciary, and legislative branches.

In the presence of Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, his highness received Binyamin Netanyahu, Israeli Knesset member and leader of the Likud Party, in al-'Aqabah at noon today. Yesterday, his highness received Yosi Beilin, minister in the [Israeli] Prime Ministry, and the head of the Israeli Supreme Court of Justice.

The talks between His Highness Prince Hasan and Netanyahu dealt with recent developments in the Middle East and the peace process. His highness stressed the need to achieve a comprehensive vision of peace and the need for the supremacy of law, so everyone can enjoy law and order and sense the benefits of peace.

His highness explained the need to adopt the peace agreement between Jordan and Israel as an appropriate way to give everyone his rights. He said the commitment to peace should be a permanent and mutual.

Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti stressed the need to halt violence and counterviolence and find a quick way to end the suffering of the Palestinian brothers. He also stressed the need to clarify the commitment of all parties to negotiations as a way to achieve peace.

Netanyahu stressed his party's commitment to the Jordanian-Israeli peace agreement and to maintain the positive circumstances that result from the agreement.

Jordan: Justice Minister Says No Extradition Agreement With Israel

JN2603194596 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 26 Mar 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by P.V. Vivekanand]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Amman — Justice Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Dughmi on Monday denied that Israel and Jordan had reached an extradition agreement and affirmed that the visit of a high-level delegation of Israeli judges to the Kingdom this week was aimed at familiarisation with Jordanian laws following the

signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty in October 1994.

In a related comment, Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, hosting Mr. al-Dughmi at a weekly press briefing, said the visit of Israeli opposition leader Binyamin Netanyahu to 'Aqaba on Tuesday for talks with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the Regent, was part of Jordan's efforts to be closely informed on developments in the Israeli political scene.

Justice Minister al-Dughmi described as technical the visit of the Israeli delegation representing the Judiciary and headed by Ahron Baraq, head of the Israeli supreme court, which was received by Crown Prince Hasan on Sunday. The delegation also held talks with senior Jordanian judges.

"The visit has no political bearing," said Mr.al-Dughmi, who also held meetings with the team. "They (the delegation) wanted to have a look at Jordanian laws and compare them with Israeli laws."

He cited as an example the Jordanian and Israeli laws relevant to the property of Arabs in pre-1948 Palestine.

The delegation expressed interest in "more exchanges" in judicial matters between Jordan and Israel in line with the peace treaty, said Mr. al-Dughmi. But he denied an implied suggestion in a question that the two countries had reached an extradition agreement and that this was one of the issues raised by the delegation.

"There is no agreement between the two countries on extraditing criminals," said the Minister.

Information minister al-Mu'ashshir, in reply to another question, said it was only natural that Mr. Netanyahu, leader of the Likud bloc in Israel, was visiting Jordan since the Kingdom sought to keep contacts with Israeli political leaders to "familiarise itself with what is happening in the Israeli arena and not to be surprised by any developments."

Mr. Netanyahu is paying the visit upon an invitation from Crown Prince Hasan, a spokesman for the Likud leader said in Israel earlier in the day.

The visit is aimed at "an exchange of views" on various issues, said Dr. al-Mu'ashshir. "It has no other bearing whatsoever," and that Jordan had no other objective either in extending the invitation to the Likud leader.

The minister noted that there was nothing untoward in the governments of any two countries with friendly relations establishing contacts with the political forces in each other.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir also noted that "it will not be the first time that Mr. Netanyahu will be visiting Jordan."

The Likud leader, a strong challenger to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in May 29 elections, visited Jordan twice after the Kingdom and the Jewish state signed the October 1994 peace treaty.

The information minister also affirmed that Likud was not the only party that Jordan was in touch with among Israeli political parties, but he did not elaborate.

There is an overwhelming across-the-board support among Israeli political parties for the peace treaty with Jordan, and Mr. Netanyahu has reaffirmed in public comments his support for close Israeli-Jordanian economic cooperation.

Other points made by Mr. al-Dughmi and Dr. al-Mu'ashshir during the press briefing were:

— Jordan does not have any political prisoners, and recent arrests of suspects were strictly related to security (Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said last week that security forces had thwarted at least 36 attempts aimed at destabilising Jordan and that those arrested in connection with the attempts would be sent to court soon).

Mr. al-Dughmi declined to discuss the nature of the attempts, saying revealing such information would hamper investigations. But, he said, "those who are innocent will be freed and those who are guilty will be punished under Jordanian laws."

In essence, he added, the Jordanian legal system upheld the universal principle that "no innocent person will be sentenced even if 100 criminals were acquitted under the due process of the law." [passage omitted]

Jordan: 'Ranking Officials' Reportedly Involved in Drug Smuggling

JN2603151696 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 26 Mar 96 p 1

["Exclusive" report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Official government sources revealed that large quantities of various kinds of narcotics worth large sums of money were confiscated over the past few days.

The sources told AL-RA'Y that ranking officials may be involved in smuggling the narcotics into the country for trading purposes. The sources asserted that the government is bent on striking at all sources of corruption, wherever they may be and no matter how powerful they are, in an effort to fulfill the government's commitments expressed in its policy statement before the House of Representatives. The sources added that the

government will not renege on its policy to combat corruption and corrupt individuals. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Governor Rejects Shubaylat Nomination for Balqa Polls

JN2603150696 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 26 Mar 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by Nirmin Murad]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Balqa' Governor Dhib Sulayman Monday rejected the candidacy of imprisoned politician Layth Shubaylat who had filed nomination papers on Saturday for the April 15 Balqa' Governorate by-elections for Parliament. Mr. Shubaylat's lawyers were busy Monday preparing an appeal of the decision at Salt's court of First Instance, the final authority on whether to accept Mr. Shubaylat's candidacy. The court's decision cannot be appealed.

The governor's decision was addressed in a letter to Mr. Shubaylat's lawyer Rasmi Lutfi al-Khuza'i, who had filed Mr. Shubaylat's nomination papers on his behalf.

Mr. Shubaylat's lawyer Jawad Yunus declined comment Monday afternoon and staff at his office said he was preparing his appeal. It was not clear what arguments Mr. Yunus was going to present in the court.

The governor, who announced his decision a day before the end of a three-day period during which he can accept or reject any nomination, cited three reasons in explaining his rejection of Mr. Shubaylat's candidacy.

These included Mr. Shubaylat's failure to personally sign the nomination papers in front of the governor, his conviction of lese-majeste charges over which he was sentenced to three years in prison as well as the fact that Mr. Shubaylat, a contractor, had three major contracts with the government, which means that he "has financial interest with the government" and therefore legally unsuitable for candidacy to Parliament according to Election Law, the governor said in his letter.

The governor's decision to reject Mr. Shubaylat's nomination based on his failure to show up at the governor's office and personally sign his nomination papers was predicted early on by lawyers and politicians.

However, the governor's contention that Mr. Shubaylat was "convicted of a non-political charge," a complicated legal matter, and that Mr. Shubaylat had "financial interest with the government" were unexpected developments.

The government had allowed a notary public officer to visit Mr. Shubaylat in his prison and sign a power of attorney empowering Mr. al-Khuza'i to complete Mr. Shubaylat's nomination papers. However, Justice Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Dughmi Monday morning indicated that this procedure may not be adequate to meet the provisions of the Election Law.

Mr. al-Dughmi, in a press briefing, said that lawyers were divided over the meaning of an article in the Election Law which indicated that the candidate has to present his own nomination papers and sign them in front of the governor.

"There are many schools of thought over Article 22 B of the 1986 Election Law, and the governor has to determine whether a power of attorney is acceptable or is not," Mr. al-Dughmi told journalists.

While Mr. Shubaylat was convicted of lese-majeste charges and sentenced to prison, his conviction is not final since his lawyers could appeal the ruling.

Apart from the fact that the conviction of Mr. Shubaylat was not final, there was no clear definition of what constitutes a "political" crime. The Election Law bans the candidacy of persons who had been convicted of a non-political crime but not of candidates who had been convicted of a political crime.

Lawyers contacted by the JORDAN TIMES said there was no yardstick to determine whether Mr. Shabaylat's conviction of lese-majeste constituted a political or a non-political crime.

According to these lawyers, interviewed over the past week, the Jordanian law specifies what constitutes a political crime and leaves the final judgement to the assessment of the judge of the Court of First Instance if he is faced with a case where he has to give a ruling.

But in his announcement Monday, Governor Sulayman asserted that Mr. Shubaylat has been found guilty of a "non-political" crime, a contention that the judge of the Court of First Instance will either confirm or deny when he is faced with Mr. Shubaylat's appeal this week.

Mr. Sulayman's charge that Mr. Shubaylat has "financial interest with the government" and therefore not eligible for candidacy will be more difficult to refute by Mr. Shubaylat's lawyers.

According to the governor's statement, "Shubaylat and Badran Contractors," of which Mr. Shubaylat is a partner, had won three contracts from the government, including a JD99.875 [Jordanian dinars] contract with the Ministry of Public Works, a JD 298.080 contract and another worth JD 199.900, both with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation.

"So it became evident to me that your client is a financial beneficiary of government departments," Mr. Sulayman said in his letter to Mr. Shubaylat's lawyer, adding

that "Article 18 of the 1986 Election Law stipulates that a candidate for elections to Parliament cannot be a financial beneficiary of the government."

Lebanon: Al-Hirawi Receives Bush on Arrival in Beirut

NC2603182896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] As part of the current U.S. activity in the region, former U.S. President George Bush arriv[illegible] in Lebanon sometime ago as guest of President [illegible]yas al-Hirawi at the B'abda Palace.

The several-hour visit by Bush who has come from Damascus, takes on a special importance and significance as regards U.S.-Lebanese ties even though it is a private visit within a tour of several countries in the region.

Former President Bush is scheduled to hold a round of talks with President Ilyas al-Hirawi, followed by a rest in the guests suite at the B'abda Palace. Afterward, former President Bush will make a short statement to journalists. Tonight, former President Bush will see a musical show performed by artist Majidah al-Rumi and the Romeo Lahhud Group in the presence of President Ilyas al-Hirawi and a limited number of personalities.

The show will be followed by a banquet hosted by the president in honor of his American guest. It will be attended by Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, ministers, members of the Chamber of Deputies' Bureau, chairmen of the parliamentary committees, and Arab and foreign ambassadors.

President al-Hirawi will deliver a speech at the dinner.

Former President Bush visited the Syrian capital before noon en route from Bahrain and met with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad at the Palace of the People. Diplomatic sources in Damascus said the talks between Presidents al-Asad and Bush dealt with the situation in the region and the latest developments of the peace process.

We now have on the line NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent at the Presidential Palace in B'abda.

[Begin recording] Former U.S. President George Bush arrived at the Presidential Palace just 1-2 minutes ago. He was immediately received by President Ilyas al-Hirawi. Bush arrived in a motorcade from the U.S. Embassy. Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz was in the Presidential Palace's outer yard to receive Bush. Bush reviewed a presidential guard, which played music. He was received in the inner hall of the palace by President Ilyas al-Hirawi. After taking photographs, they immediately held a meeting.

After the meeting, former President Bush is expected to make a statement, to be followed by a musical show performed by artist Majidah al-Rumi and the Romeo Lahhud Group. At 2100, President al-Hirawi will host a dinner banquet in honor of the former U.S. president. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Lebanon: Al-Hirawi Views Bush Visit, Violence

NC2603202596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi has expressed the hope that the presence of former U.S. President George Bush here today will be a declaration for the end of the ban imposed on Lebanon by the U.S. Administration under President Ronald Reagan.

President al-Hirawi stressed that Lebanon is against violence and terrorism. He added that violence cannot be uprooted by further violation of rights but by treating the true political reasons of violence or counterviolence. President al-Hirawi noted that violence will decline with the success of peace, but it will increase with the failure of peace.

Lebanon: Former U.S. President Bush Leaves Beirut

NC2703121496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Former U.S. President George Bush left Beirut this morning. Lebanon was his last stop on a tour that included Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain, all of which joined the international allied force. Bush spent last night at the Presidential Palace in B'abda. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Fadlallah Views Israel's 'Nazism,' Washington Meeting

NC2703081496 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ayatollah al-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has stated that the crimes of Zionism outweigh those of Hitler. This is because Zionism killed and displaced the people of Palestine and engaged in actions that Hitler did not carry out, such as blowing up the King David Hotel and ripping off the bellies of pregnant women in Dayr Yasin and other Palestinian villages.

Speaking at a Koranic interpretation lesson, Fadlallah added: We believe that if there is a country that comes close to or outweighs Hitler's Germany, then this country can be none other than Israel, which offers

an example of modern Nazism. He stressed that Israel epitomizes the barbarian state, because it practiced and continues to practice brutality against children, women, and elderly people.

Turning to the meeting of the follow-up committee emanating from the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, Fadlallah said:

[Begin Fadlallah recording] What is required of the 28 March meeting is to move from rhetoric to details; that is, to an action plan in this regard. Of course, it is natural for the United States to ask all these countries to condemn and isolate Iran and to track down all the Islamic movements to deny them any assistance, something that many European and non-European countries may consider as a departure from the legal boundaries of their freedom and [words indistinct]. Therefore, we do not believe that the coming meeting will achieve the results the United States wants. [end recording]

Lebanon: Hizballah Chief Views 'Retraction' of Israeli Threats

NC2703084196 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Hizballah secretary general, His Eminence al-Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, has confirmed that the enemy's retraction of its threats is because it has had few chances to carry them out and because of the magnitude of the adventure it would be embarking on, because what the enemy is facing now in Lebanon is unlike what it faced in earlier times.

Nasrallah's remarks came at a meeting with the Islamic Resistance mujahidin who carried out the recent heroic operations inside the occupied zone in the south. He added:

[Begin Nasrallah recording] We believe that the reason for the Israeli retraction which we have heard about in the past few days is not U.S. political pressure, as the enemy says. The Americans want to impose a new situation. The scenario envisions (?suspending) the resistance operations in exchange for the Israelis not carrying out extensive military actions against Lebanon. However, our land will remain occupied, our brothers and sisters will remain in prisons and detention camps, our kinsfolk in the occupied border strip will continue to endure suffering and the humiliation of occupation, and our people displaced from the occupied border strip will remain homeless. In exchange, in order to increase Shim'on Peres' chances of election, the resistance must halt its operations.

I do not believe that this proposal is acceptable to anybody. I tell you with full confidence and faith that what forced Shim'on Peres to retract his threats and bombast are the limited opportunities available to him and the magnitude of the adventure that he might be embarking on. The situation he is facing in Lebanon now is different from before. In Lebanon there are mujahidin, resistance fighters, a steadfast and patient people, and a spirit of defiance, martyrdom, jihad, and victory. Thus, as I have already said, any attempt will be nothing but an adventure. It will definitely not be a picnic. [end recording]

Lebanon: U.S. Line on Syria, Lebanon Seen as Unchanged

MM2603140596 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 25 Mar 96 p 17

[Article by Khayrallah Khayrallah: "No Change in U.S. Password!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ultimately, Washington should have gone to Damascus to ease the situation in south Lebanon. Those Lebanese who demonstrated or put on armed displays and those Palestinians who talked about suicide operations from the camps in Lebanon were more like props in an unfinished play whose scenes can only be completed by achieving a peace agreement between Syria and Israel.

Despite these armed displays and the provocations by these Lebanese and Palestinian sides using Lebanese territories as a starting point, it is possible to draw some conclusions that some Lebanese believe to be useful to them and to their country. Foremost is the conclusion that, in general and despite Damascus' refusal to attend the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, U.S. policy toward Syria has not changed. Sure, the U.S. tone has changed, but the general motto governing U.S. policy and possibly the accepted and unchanged U.S. password is "do not disturb Syria." In practice, this has led to a resumption of the U.S.-Syrian dialogue with a view to controlling the situation in south Lebanon. It seems that the United States makes a distinction between Syria's and Iran's positions, and that, while Iran continues to fight the peace process, Syria, as is apparent from Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar''s letter to the U.S. secretary of state and the Russian foreign minister, maintains that it is still committed to the peace, with all the implications of the necessity to deal with it on this premise.

Hence, to a great extent, the Lebanese position seems sound, especially since it is based on not disturbing Syria. If the United States and Israel do not want to disturb Syria, why should Lebanon embark on actions

which would only lead to undermining its internal situation?

Therefore, it is obvious that while some Lebanese and Palestinians in Lebanon have accepted the part of foreign tools, the Lebanese Government has refused to play such a part, and, instead, has opted to safeguard strategic relations with Syria, just as Syria still considers peace "a strategic option."

Moreover, there are likely to be some surprises, in view of the fact that Israel is on the verge of holding elections and Shim'on Peres may need to show that he can be a real general despite the fact that he never once wore military uniform. It is evident, however, that thus far, and despite the strong internal pressures, Lebanon has managed to steer past an extremely dangerous turning. The lesson for those boisterous rivals who forced the U.S. ambassador, along with other ambassadors, to leave the meeting of one of the chamber of deputies' committees, is that the peace process is stronger than any other factor in the region, and that sooner or later it will come. The real danger for Lebanon is that, thanks to those who believe that playing the part of a foreign tool is the reason for their existence, peace may come before it is ready for it.

Syria: Al-Asad Says Country 'Committed' to Peace Foundations

JN2603182596 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1700 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 26 Mar (SANA)—His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad received former U.S. President George Bush at the People's Palace at 1030 today.

Discussions dealt with a number of international and regional issues. They also reviewed the situation in the region and exchanged views on the peace process, which started during President Bush's administration and continued during President Bill Clinton's administration. They also discussed the current status of the peace process.

His excellency the president asserted that Syria, which contributed positively and effectively to the launch of the peace process and cooperated to render it a success, is committed to the foundations of this process.

President Bush expressed appreciation for Syria's contribution to the start of the peace process and the Madrid conference. He said he is convinced that a just and comprehensive peace can be achieved in line with the foundations of the peace process.

Syria: Israel Blamed for Peace Process 'Moving Backward'

JN2603154796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 26 Mar 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Since the start of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the United Nations has adopted hundreds of resolutions that champion the Palestinian people's rights and consecrate the Arabs' right to regain their occupied lands. None of these resolutions has been implemented, thanks to the persistent double-standard policy adopted by influential parties in the international community. They turn a blind eye to Israel's practices that violate the simplest rights of individuals and groups of people. They deal with it as if it is above the laws, norms, and charters.

The Arabs rejoiced at the fact that the international community might return to the right track after the launching of the U.S.-Russian peace initiative and the convening of Madrid conference. However, hope soon faded as Israel obstructed the peace process over the years. Nevertheless, it was not held accountable and came under no pressure. The net result is the current regression of the cause of peace on all fronts of the conflict. The peace process is completely suspended on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks and frozen on the Palestinian track. Israel violated the unfair agreements that it imposed by force and coercion and failed to observe a single right of the Palestinian people, who are now subjected to an organized military closure, daily starvation, and collective terrorism committed under the guise of combating terrorism.

The international community should have sought to explore the causes that precluded the progress of the peace process in order to remove the obstacles that block it. However, influential parties in the international community once again embraced Israel's lexicon. Thus they confused terrorism, which targets the innocent people, with legitimate national resistance against the occupation. They turned a blind eye to Israel's practices in the occupied territories and southern Lebanon — practices that are tantamount to the worst and most serious forms of state terrorism and collective punishment.

These bitter facts prompted the EU to make a public complaint. France criticized the proposed Washington conference on fighting the alleged terrorism. It said that the EU has its opinion: If there is terrorism, then it is a result and not a cause. The causes should be addressed. The causes are known to all. They are represented by the Israeli occupation, the rejection of withdrawal from the Arab territories and implementation of the UN resolutions, the bypassing of the foundations of the peace process, the subjecting of the Palestinian people to organized collective terrorism, and the unleashing of the hands of Zionist settlers to tamper with their affairs and lands.

Everybody knows that 80 percent of the West Bank was granted to the Zionist settlers and their settlements. Jerusalem was sieged from all directions, and it, along with its people, was stripped from the West Bank. It is also known that the Israeli army has not stopped its ugly practices for a single day. It demolishes houses and displaces residents. The question that should be raised here is: Who will condemn this terrorism? Why do the influential parties in the international community fail to raise their voices? When will the double-standard policy end?

The peace process is moving backward. Without returning to the Madrid conference's foundations and terms of reference and confronting Israel with the facts and requirements of peace, the foremost of which is full withdrawal from the occupied territories and acknowledgment of the Palestinian rights, it is impossible for the peace process to make any progress. Peace is, first and foremost, that of people, rights, and justice. There can be no peace between the usurper of the lands of others who refuses to return the lands and those against whom

the aggression was staged and who find no response to their rightful and just demands.

Syria: Papers Call For Return to Madrid Principles

JN2703092596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0555 GMT 27 Mar 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial entitled "Israel Shirks Peace," AL-BA'TH says: Israel fabricated pretexts to foil the peace process, but it cannot justify its pretexts even if they are supported by those who are known to defend them and provide cover for its methods of evading international responsibility.

AL-BA'TH stresses that Syria maintains its position in support of the Madrid conference and the hopes raised by that conference which caused the world to breath a sigh of relief with the hope that the Middle East would be stable and the dangers in the region would cease.

AL-BA'TH adds: Since the first round of negotiations in Washington, this eagerness by Syria was met by Israel with hesitation and disavowal of responsibilities and commitments. AL-BA'TH says: Had Israel been really serious about peace, the negotiations would not have taken much time; they would have been completed within a few rounds. The international resolutions are clear and the Madrid initiative, which calls for exchanging land for peace, is clear. Israel fears peace under flimsy and unconvincing pretexts, although it possesses all means of war and continues to receive steady support.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Israel has since the Madrid conference behaved irresponsibly and showed no desire to maintain regional peace and security. Syria will not be the party that complicates matters. It, however, will never be reassured about Israeli intentions. Whether the Israelis suspend or freeze the negotiations, peace without the restoration of full rights is rejected, and peace that serves only one party is also rejected. Our people are entitled to their full rights.

In a commentary entitled "The Positive Role," AL-THAWRAH addresses the positive Syrian role since the start of the Madrid conference, which constituted a basic gateway for the peace process—a process which sparked international optimism in the possibility of realizing a just and comprehensive peace.

AL-THAWRAH emphasizes that Syria contributed to the continuation of the peace process and rescued it from collapse at more than one juncture due to Israel's intransigent positions on the one hand, and its aggressive practices on the other. AL-THARWAH reviews how Israel evaded the principles of a just and comprehensive peace by concluding partial agreements and settlements which were proven by events to be fragile. It also reviews how Israel arrogantly insisted on its own concept of peace which is always coupled with the continuation of all or part of its occupation as a gateway for its hegemony over the region through economic, cultural, and political projects.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: Respecting the principles of peace is important at this stage so that the peace process can be resumed on clear principles set by the Madrid terms of reference. These principles are the only way to achieve a real breakthrough in the peace process toward the aspired objective — namely, a just and comprehensive peace that is the only gateway for security and stability in the region for the welfare of the peoples of the region and the whole world.

Under the title "Policy of Diverse Standards," TISHRIN says the European Union, represented by France, voiced objection to the tendencies of Washington's counterterrorism conference to tackle the effect and ignore the real causes of what is happening in the region.

TISHRIN says that the influential international quarters deliberately fail to differentiate between terrorism against individuals, which is condemned, and legitimate national resistance of occupation. These quarters ignore the organized terrorism Israel is practicing against the Palestinian people which reached the point of starving the Arab inhabitants and depriving them of their simplest rights.

TISHRIN adds: Israel exploited this situation to renew its siege on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, fully isolate Jerusalem, demolish the Arab houses, deport people, and arrest thousands. It also used this situation as a pretext to disavow the peace process and freeze it on all tracks, at a time when the Israeli political parties are in a race toward extremism and hardline positions that show clear aggressive expansionist spirit and disdain for peace efforts made over the past four years.

TISHRIN emphasizes that Israel would not have pursued this policy had it not been encouraged by the international community's inaction and certain influential parties' continued use of double standards—one for the Arabs and another for the Jewish entity. If there is terrorism that deserves to be condemned, it is the blatant Israeli terrorism which took serious dimensions as a result of its flagrant violation of human rights and the UN principles and charters.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: The policy of using different standards led those whose rights were usurped to lose confidence in the credibility of the international community. To prevent a serious relapse in the peace process, there is no alternative to returning to the Madrid conference, its principles, and terms of reference, and to addressing the causes of the continuing conflict in the region, headed by Israeli occupation of Arab territories and Israel's refusal to implement international resolutions and to recognize legitimate Palestinian rights.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rabbani Reportedly Offers Hekmatyar Premiership

LD2503140596 Tehran IRNA in English 1327 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Mar 25 (IRNA) — Golboddin Hekmatyar, chief of Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party of] Afghanistan and an arch opponent of the Kabul government has been offered the primiership of Afghanistan by President Borhanoddin Rabbani which he is likely to accept, says a report.

Hekmatyar is one of the main leaders opposed to the Kabul government and a central leader of the Coordination Council of the Islamic Revolution in Afghanistan (OCIRA).

The Coordination Council consists of Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan led by Hekmatyar, the National Liberation Front of Professor Mojaddedi, the National Islamic Movement of General Rashid Dostam, and the Hezb-e Wahdat [Islamic Unity Party] of Karim Khalili.

The report says, "if Hekmatyar does decide to join Rabbani, it would be a setback for the opposition as well as the Coordination Council.

Hekmatyar, who has been locked in negotiations with the Kabul government for some time now, is said to have been offered the post of prime minister, foreign minister, and interior minister for his party if he agrees to join the government of President Rabbani.

Currently negotiations are under way in Jalalabad with the Kabul government represented by Doctor Abdul Rehman.

Rabbani has been making smilar offers to other members of the opposition. A few months ago Maulvi Younas Khalis had been offered the presidency of the war-ravaged Afghanistan, which he had declined, the report added.

Afghanistan: UN Envoy Talks With Hekmatyar; Taleban Ready for Talks

LD2603181596 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A representative of Mahmud Mestiri, special UN envoy on Afghanistan, has met Brother Hekmatyar.

A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reported from Jalalabad that at this meeting, held in the residence of Hezb-e Eslami's [Islamic Party] amir, talks were held on the country's current political and military situation.

The report adds that the representative of Mahmud Mestiri, Abu-Nafisa, who has just returned from Kandahar, said the following to Brother Hekmatyar:

Mola Rabbani, a spokesman of the Taleban group, has asked the United Nations to prepare the ground for talks between the Taleban and the Kabul administration. He said that the Taleban has now (?abandoned) its past conditions and now does not even ask for Ustad [Professor] Rabbani's resignation.

Abu-Nafisa also stated that Mahmud Mestiri will arrive in Kabul (?during the coming week) to conduct talks on Afghan issues.

According to another report, Abu-Nafisa, on UN's behalf, expressed satisfaction to Brother Hekmatyar for opening all roads leading to Kabul and assisting the people of Kabul to benefit from the restoration of electric power. Brother Hekmatyar said that he was ready to extend every kind of assistance to the people of Kabul. Brother Hekmatyar said that the task of restoring electric power to Kabul was because of sympathy to the people, which had nothing to do with the political talks with the Kabul administration.

Afghanistan: Hezb-e Eslami To Continue Talks With Government, Taleban

LD2603153096 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hezb-e Eslami's Central Council has decided to continue the current talks for the restoration of peace and consolidation of the Islamic government in the country. The council [Shura] also said that Hezb-e Eslami should start talks with the Taleban and other groups to achieve understanding.

A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reported from Jalalabad city that Hezb-e Eslami's Central Council session, which was held in the headquarters of Nangarhar's Army Corps No. 2, ended yesterday afternoon.

The council decided to extend the members' term of office for another year, and that in this year [words indistinct] the ground should be prepared for the election of new members.

The report adds that Brother Hekmatyar passed on detailed information about the progress of talks with the Kabul administration and the Taleban group as well as about the current situation.

After a debate in a free atmosphere, the council's members gave full authority to the leadership office and to the Executive Council to continue the current

talks and to reach a beneficial conclusion for the consolidation of the Islamic government.

The report adds that the council also decided that serious attention should be paid to the consolidation of the High Coordination Council's office. All talks must be conducted at coordination council level.

The report adds that the Central Council also decided that Hezb-e Eslami is keeping the door open to the Taleban, despite the fact that during the past nine months the Taleban group has never showed any kind of honesty in talks with the Coordination Council and is still keeping the door to talks closed.

Afghanistan: Bomber Strikes Kill 51 Taleban, Injure 42

LD2603173296 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Fifty-one men of the Taleban were killed today in Bagh-e Zakhira and in the training center of Chahar Asiab when air force bombers in three sorties bombed these two centers of Taleban concentration.

According to reports received by BAKHTAR, the air force bombers accurately bombed the concentration points and fortifications of Benazir's Bhutto's Taleban to the south of Kabul. As a result of these raids, in addition to the 51 deaths, another 42 men were injured. Two bombs directly hit a location where the Taleban were holding an assembly. It was reported that a large number of the Taleban commanders and officials were among those killed.

As a result of the raids, a Taleban military (?base) was completely destroyed.

According to another report, the Taleban group today fired rockets on residential areas of Kabul city. Four rockets hit Chehelstun area, killing one person and seriously injuring 30.

India

India: Former Minister Kalp Nath Rai Resigns From Congress-I

BK2603130496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The former union minister, Mr. Kalp Nath Rai, has resigned from the primary membership of the Congress-I. He has sent his resignation letter from the Tihar Jail to the party president, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao. Mr. Kalp Nath Rai has been lodged in Tihar Jail for his alleged involvement in a TADA [Terrorism and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act] case.

India: Body of Missing Kashmiri Activist Found; Hundreds Protest

BK2703071196 Hong Kong AFP in English 0701 GMT 27 Mar 96

[Report by Izhar Wani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SRINAGAR, India, March 27 (AFP) — Hundreds of angry Moslems took to the streets screaming anti-India slogans here Wednesday [27 March] after the corpse of a well-known Kashmiri rights activist was found in a river, witnesses said.

The body of Jalil Andrabi, a lawyer who was kidnapped on the outskirts of this Kashmir summer capital this month, was found early Wednesday in the Jhelum river, police said.

According to witnesses, Andrabi was seized by renegade Moslem militants supported by India and members of the Indian army's Rashtriya Rifles unit while travelling in a car with his wife on March 8.

The Indian authorities have denied any involvement in the abduction.

Hundreds of Srinagar residents Wednesday staged spontaneous anti- India demonstrations as news spread of the discovery of his body. Shopkeepers closed down in an immediate protest strike.

A crowd led by Yasin Malik, a leader of the pro-independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), went to a police station and began marching on the nearby high court with the body, witnesses said.

But policemen wielding batons and firing into the air charged at them, beating up Malik and his aide Javed Mir, and seized the body. Policemen also roughed up three photographers, including AFP's Tauseef Mustafa.

"This is a brazen murder committed by the Indian Government," charged Altaf Naik, a lawyer who identified Andrabi's body. "The body must be given to us for burial." Police said the city of 800,000 people was tense.

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other rights groups had denounced the kidnapping of Andrabi, the chairman of the Kashmir Commission of Jurists, and called for his immediate release.

Prior to his abduction, Andrabi had been scheduled to attend a UN human rights meeting in Geneva on March 18. The Kashmir Bar Association here has been on an indefinite strike since the abduction.

Wednesday's protests came as Kashmiri police returned to the troubled state's holiest mosque and began erecting new sandbagged bunkers, one day after Moslem militants holed up inside surrendered their weapons.

Kashmiri policemen strengthened positions they had held outside the Hazratbal mosque on the city's outskirts before a three-day standoff with about 20 heavily-armed militants began on Sunday, government officials said.

"The police have taken up their old bunkers and are setting up new ones," said Kashmir government spokesman Kulbushan Jindiyal, adding that the Hazratbal mosque was being cleaned by members of a trust which manages it.

A curfew clamped around the imposing shrine remained in place. The estimated 2,000 police and paramilitary troops deployed in the area were not withdrawn.

The militants who took over the mosque on Sunday emerged in groups of three overnight after reaching a pact with the government under which they would give up their weapons but would not be arrested.

Police sources said the gunmen had returned to their offices located close to the lakeside mosque, which houses a hair Kashmiri Moslems believe comes from the beard of Prophet Mohammad.

The militants who gave themselves up Tuesday belonged to a splinter group of the JKLF.

Local JKLF leader Shabir Siddiqui said the trouble erupted on Sunday when police commandos suddenly barged into his office near the mosque and started to fire, killing nine men including its military chief Basharat Raza.

He said other furious guerrillas then took over the shrine.

More than 12,000 people have been killed and thousands of others injured in a Moslem separatist drive raging in Kashmir since 1989. Indian troops have been widely accused of carrying out extra-judicial killings in the state.

India: Further on End of Hazratbal Shrine Standoff Reported

BK2603155596 Hong Kong AFP in English 1541 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Srinagar, India, March 26 (AFP) — A standoff at Kashmir's holiest mosque ended here on Tuesday [26 March] with Muslim separatist militants holed up in the shrine handing over their weapons to the authorities, police sources said.

Around 20 heavily-armed Muslim guerrillas surrendered their weapons to Kashmir police chief M.N. Sabharwal and government officials following a three-day siege of the Islamic shrine by the security forces, they said.

The militants emerged from Srinagar's Hazratbal mosque in groups of three after an agreement was reached under which they would give up their arms but would not be taken into custody, the police sources said.

"We have evacuated the shrine," said Kashmir government spokesman Kulbushan Jindiyal. "You may call it a surrender or an evacuation."

Around 2,000 policemen and paramilitary troopers had ringed the Hazratbal mosque since a gunbattle on Sunday between police and members of a faction of the pro-independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF).

At least nine JKLF militants and two policemen were killed in the shootout at Hazratbal, which houses a whisker which Kashmiri Muslims believe comes from the beard of the Prophet Mohammed.

Among the dead was the group's military commander, Basharat Raza, whose body was removed from the shrine along with those of seven others on Tuesday.

The police sources said the trustees of the shrine entered the mosque after the surrender of the JKLF militants to confirm that the holy relic had not been harmed.

The leader of the JKLF faction, Shabir Siddiqui, remained inside the shrine while the trustees inspected the relic, they said. [passage omitted]

India: Police Clear Hazratbal Shrine in Kashmir of 'Militants'

BK2703010596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0035 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar has been cleared of the militants. All the militants holed up in the shrine came out last night. Our Srinagar correspondent reports that the task was accomplished by the state administration with the help of some senior citizens of the area and negotiations with the militants through some intermediaries.

The Jammu and Kashmir police have again scoured the shrine with the help of the Muslim Awkaf [Endowment] Trust. The shrine is being thrown open to the public for worship again. As reported, the militants belonging to the JKLF [Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front] occupied the shrine on Sunday [24 March] night after a shoot-out with the state police. Eight militants and a policeman were killed in the incident. The state administration has reiterated that religious places will not be allowed to be misused.

India: Total of 17 'Militants' Vacate Hazratbal Shrine in Kashmir

BK2703033796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Srinagar, all the militants have vacated the holy shrine of Hazratbal. Their exit began around 1900 yesterday and was completed in about two hours. The number of militants who came out is unofficially put at 17. They belong to the JKLF [Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front]-Siddiqui group. The militants had sneaked into the shrine after an encounter with the state police, which left eight militants and one policeman killed.

The shrine has now been restored to its original position with the help of the Muslim Awkaf [Endowment] Trust. An official spokesman said in Srinagar that the shrine is being thrown open to the people; meanwhile, the state administration has reiterated that it will not allow religious places to be misused and their sanctity will be maintained at all costs.

India: Commentary Reviews Hazratbal Shrine Episode in Srinagar

BK2703061496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 27 Mar 96

[Commentary by Ashok Handu]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] With the curtain falling on the three-day sordid affair of a few militants sneaking into the holy shrine of Hazratbal in Srinagar, the people throughout Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere have heaved a sigh of relief. It all began on Sunday [24 March] last around 1130 when a group of militants trying to get into the shrine with arms were intercepted by the J and K [Jammu and Kashmir] policemen guarding the shrine. One of the militants opened fire killing one policeman and injuring four. In the return fire, eight militants were killed. Those who managed to sneak into the shrine remained holed up for three days until last night. Their coming out was a culmination of the effort of the state administration and some senior citizens of the shrine area. The shrine has now been restored to its original position with the help of Muslim Awkaf [Endowment] Trust and is being thrown open to the people.

The 300-year-old shrine of Hazratbal houses the relic of Prophet Muhammad and is the most revered shrine in Kashmir. Understandably, any attempt to desecrate it cannot be taken kindly by the people of Kashmir. If they have expressed deep resentment over the incident, it is but natural. It is for the second time during the last six years of turmoil in Kashmir that militants occupied the shrine and hurt the feelings of the devout. The first time it happened was in 1994 when the standoff continued for over a month. Fortunately, on both the occasions, the state administration exhibited utmost restraint in dealing with the situation. But the story does not end there. It is common knowledge now that Pakistan has been moving every nerve and utilising every occasion to foment trouble in Kashmir. If it has not succeeded in its designs, it is because the people of Kashmir have seen through its game plan.

The Hazratbal episode has been a lesson for the administration also. Throughout history, Kashmir has been the land of saints and seers with people having utmost faith in places of worship. The vulnerability of religious places in the present situation in Kashmir becomes more prominent and calls for extra care to safeguard their sanctity. With the government reiterating that it will not allow anybody to desecrate the religious places, the point seems to have been well taken. It is not yet known how many militants came out of the shrine, though unofficially their number is put at 17. Questions like whether the militants have been allowed to go and what actually made them come out are also yet to be answered; but, in a situation like this it does take time for things to clear up. The state authorities are at work and may hopefully provide all the details as early as possible.

India: Government Satisfied With Peaceful End to Shrine Episode

BK2703090696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Jammu and Kashmir government has expressed satisfaction over the peaceful resolution of the Hazratbal episode. An official spokesman said in Srinagar today that a joint team of Jammu and Kashmir police, the Muslim Awkaf [Endowment] Trust, and senior citizens of the area visited the shrine after it was vacated by the militants last night and found the holy relic and the shrine safe. An unsuccessful attempt had, however, been made to break open the locks of the outer gate of the sanctum sanctorum which has now been resealed. Steps are being taken to strengthen the safety of the holy relic. The shrine is likely to be thrown open to the public later today.

India: 'Stern' Action Against Kashmir 'Militants' To Begin 28 Mar

BK2703125896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Jammu and Kashmir governor has reiterated that no one will be allowed to misuse religious places. He warned militants in the state

to surrender to avoid stern action against them to be initiated tomorrow. General Krishna Rao was talking to newsmen in Srinagar after visiting the Hazratbal shrine. The governor said there has been no deal with the militants who remained holed up in the shrine for three days. A large number of people, who received the governor at the shrine, demanded deployment of more forces to strengthen the security of the shrine. The holy shrine, which has now been restored to its original position with the help of the Muslim Awkaf [Endowment] Trust, is being cleaned up before it is thrown open to the public.

Iran

Iran: Official Demands Speedy Release of Iranians Held in Eritrea

LD2603220296 Tehran IRNA in English 2149 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 26, IRNA — Iran's Foreign Office Spokesman, Dr Mahmud Mohammadi has demanded speedy return of three Iranian nationals to the Islamic Republic of Iran held by the security forces in Asmara, Eritrea here today.

The three Iranian nationals, on a Sudanese hijacked plane, and held in Eritrea, were actively engaged in the economic sector of private gas supply company in Port Sudan, stated the Foreign Office spokesman.

The three Iranians who are permanent employees of Iran Gas Company were hijacked by two hijackers in the midair along with the rest of the passangers at 11, (Sudanese local time) Sunday, March 24, 96, said Dr Mohammadi. Mahmud stated that all passengers were returned to Khartoum. However, the three Iranian nationals were held under the pretext of their being unidentified as to which nationalities they belonged.

The Foreign Office spokesman pointed out that the three Iranian nationals were not carrying sufficient identification according to the Eritrean sources, adding that it should be noted that the three Iranians were in fact taking an internal flight — a domestic route.

Dr Mohammadi finally stated that the Eritrean officials have been informed of their true identity through diplomatic channels and have asked for their immediate release according to the international norms and practices.

The Iranian Foreign Office spokesman severely condemned any form of hijacking and added that any delay in the release of the hijacked passangers is a breach of international laws.

Iran: Radio Sums Up 'Compromise Process' During Past Year

NC2703083496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 26 Mar 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Talks between Syria and the Zionist regime halted after the consecutive explosions in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv in Esfand [month ending 20 March 1996] and have not yet resumed. The Zionist regime has set several conditions for the resumption of these talks. Specifically, it has demanded that Syria shut down the Palestinian organizations' offices in Damascus. Syria has rejected this demand and accused the Zionist regime of focusing on secondary issues, thereby plunging the so-called peace process into an impasse. In this connection, today's commentary will discuss the compromise process during the past [Iranian] year.

Last year the compromise process went slowly, with many ups and downs. This year there were setbacks in all the phases the authors of the compromise had envisaged for the process. The first phase was the beginning of separate talks between Tel Aviv and each of the Arab countries that was a party to the conflict with the Zionist regime. So far, in this phase of the compromise process, apart from the two agreements that were signed between the PLO and Tel Aviv on 22 Shahrivar 1373 [13 September 1994] and between Jordan and Tel Aviv on 3 Mordad 1373 [25 July 1994], no new agreement was signed during the past year between Tel Aviv and the other major parties to the conflict—that is, Syria and Lebanon. This shows clearly that the compromise process is at an impasse.

The first round of the Damascus-Tel Aviv talks last year was held on 6 Tir [27 June] at the level of the joint chiefs of staffs. This round lasted two weeks. However, because of the Zionist regime's insistence on setting up warning stations in the Golan Heights in case of withdrawal from these areas, the talks ended without any tangible results and there were no talks for six months.

The Syrian-Israeli talks, second round, resumed on 6 Dey [27 December]. But since at that time the main objective of America and the Zionist regime was to hide their concern over the complete halt in the compromise process following the death of Yitzhaq Rabin, Tel Aviv — despite the UN resolutions and land-for-peace principles agreed on in Madrid — made demands that amounted to a continuation of the occupation of Golan

through other means, and this led to the failure of the talks.

Nevertheless, in order to hide the impasse in the Damascus-Tel Aviv talks and fool public opinion, the authors of the compromise deal tried to feign progress in the PLO-Tel Aviv talks and, on this basis, the agreement on the implementation of the second phase of self-rule known as the Taba agreement was signed on 6 Mehr [28 September]. After that, the elections of the head of the self-rule government and the members of the legislative council were held, on 30 Dey [20 January].

After these elections, Israel's expansionist policies continued, and in reaction to the intensification of the Zionist regime's suppressive policies and the assassinations of the martyr Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi, late leader of the Islamic Jihad Movement, and that of Yahya 'Ayyash, leader of Hamas' military branch, Hamas carried out four operations in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv. The toll suffered by the Zionist regime from these explosions was unprecedented. Never, since this regime was imposed on the area, had it suffered so many casualties.

To implement the second phase of the compromise process—the beginning of multilateral economic talks between Tel Aviv and Middle East countries—the Amman and Barcelona conferences were held, at American and European Union initiatives respectively. However, the lowering of most of the political delegations from the level of heads of state at the Casablanca conference to that of foreign ministers in Amman, as well as the boycott of this conference by most big Middle East countries and the intensification of the disagreements between America and the European Union on imposing America's political and economic views on the compromise process, have all set back this phase of the compromise.

For example, the rivalry between America and the European Union has prevented them from extending timely financial assistance to the PLO, and this has strengthened the positions of the groups of fighters that oppose the compromise process in the occupied territories.

A final roundup of the compromise process over the past year shows setbacks in all aspects of this process. Also, now effective factors — such as the decisive determination of the militant forces to continue their struggles; the approach of the Zionist regime's elections in Khordad [month ending 20 June], when the Labor Party may be defeated; and the impending U.S. elections — have all thrown doubt on the prospects for the compromise process during the coming [Iranian] year [beginning 21 March 1996].

Iran: Paper Blasts Sharm al-Shaykh Conference

NC2603141696 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 14 Mar 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial by Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh: "Sinai, Mirror of the Arabs' Shame"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday about 700 guests of Clinton, Mubarak, and Peres gathered in the Sinai desert to patch up the cracks that have emerged in the compromise process and to spare the distressed Peres and the Zionists concern over where the current troubling situation may lead. Everyone, even the police dogs, were placed on alert, turning the Sinai desert into the second most shameful event, after after Camp David.

The Zionists, who were the first to bring terrorism to the region, now want to find a solution to their problems with the support of their permanent mentors and the help of reactionary Arab leaders. In addition to the sacred land of Palestine, they continue to occupy a large part of the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. And after the martyrdoms of Fathi al-Shaqaqi and Yahya 'Ayyash, Mosad and Shin Bet have on their black list still more Palestinian fighters to be assassinated.

At Sharm al-Shaykh, once again, America and the Zionist regime used the other conference participants as tools to accomplish their objectives. But why was there no a similar conference held on Bosnia? The ethnic cleansing, war crimes, aggresions, etc. in the heart of Europe constitute the greatest such crimes in the post-World War II era. Why did no one try to save the peace in Bosnia? And now many of the authors of the Dayton peace accord are striving to save the Serb criminals and want to open up a new front against the Muslims in Mostar. If this plan is implemented, the Croats will leap at the Muslims' throats in order to save the Serbs! Isn't anyone concerned over the outcome of such a situation?

What happened in Sharm al-Shaykh?

1. Iran, Sudan, Lebanon, Libya, and Syria did not participate in the conference but were accused. As always, Peres accused the Islamic Republic of Iran of supporting terrorism. After four explosions between 24 February and 4 March, he had just emerged from behind Israel's defensive shield. The reactionary Arabs, encouraged by America, gathered around him to get him out of his domestic and foreign isolation. But even the Zionist masses are tired of the unrealistic way events are being portrayed.

Zionist Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq asked Syria to dismantle the Palestinian bases. TISHRIN's strong reaction showed that Damascus is still not willing to give in to

the illusion of compromise and serve Tel Aviv's national interests.

Mubarak's adviser Usamah al-Baz called on all Arabs to show their committment to peace by joining in the Sharm al-Shaykh conference to the benefit of America's regional interests. Answers differed. Prominent figures such as Hasan Turabi, speaking on behalf of the Sudanese Government and nation, condemned the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, describing it as a confronation between the West and Islam. But the reactionary members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council went to the conference with a gift for the Zionists: This week, after two days of talks with representatives of the American Department of Commerce, they lifted the 45-year-old sanctions by the Arabs on direct and indirect trade with Israel. However, the compromisers and those serving the Zionists' national interests cannot represent the Muslim nation.

2. The record of the reactionary heads and the supporters of compromise should be separated from that of the Islamic resistance groups. Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front, the legitimate representative of the Algerian Muslims, condemned the Algerian Government's participation in the Sharm al-Shaykh conference. And even though state terrorism by the military regime continues in Algeria, no one is talking about the democracy that has been trampled underfoot in that country. The coalition of ten Palestinian groups, Islamic Jihad, and the groups struggling for Palestine have all condemned the Sharm al—Shaykh conference. Those who genuinely support Palestine think the conference was a plot against Islam by America and the Zionist regime, and that it cannot halt the martyrdom-seeking operations. Two days before the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, after a joint meeting in Beirut, the supporters of the path of resistance issued a statement on their positions on the conference. They will once again be the target of sinister collusion by the compromisers. However, faced with the resistance, the course of action propounded by the Egypt conference is doomed to failure.

Iran: Anti-Iranian Stands of Turkey, Israel Viewed

NC2603153196 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 12 Mar 96 p 16

[Commentary by Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh: "Secularism-Zionism: An Emotional Bond"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Turkish President Suleyman Demirel has gone to occupied Palestine on a two-day official visit, the first by a Turkish president to the occupied territories. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, recently some Turkish mass media have joined in a propaganda wave sparked by American and Zionist circles against the Islamic Republic of Iran and, in tandem with Demirel's visit to Tel Aviv, HURRIYET claimed that Iranian diplomats were involved in terrorist activities in that country!

Demirel expects to be more warmly welcomed in the occupied territories with such stands, forgetting that this negative policy and tacit support for the Zionist accusations against Tehran will seriously threaten the principle of good will in relations between Iran and Turkey. And that harming this principle will make Ankara more vulnerable than ever before. Demirel considers his government to be the problem-shooter of the West in the Middle East, but these good services should not be at the cost of neglecting the principles of good neighborliness.

The Islamists in Turkey oppose the daily-increasing closeness between the secularist and Zionist regimes. This closeness started in trade and is now spreading to all fields. Last year the cancellation of visa regulations between the two countries facilitated travel by tourists from both countries and, in turn, improved cultural relations. The volume of trade, which was $45 million last year, is expected to increase to about $1 billion next year. In the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, the interests of Turkey and the Zionist regime have been tied together. The Zionist regime is supporting Turkey in its differences with Iraq and Syria over the issue of the Euphrates' waters ... and this cooperation is indirectly turning into a negative struggle against the growth of Islamism in the region and even inside Turkey. But this official link between the two governments will constantly face the threat of disintegration thanks to opposition by the Muslim nation of Turkey and especially by members of the Welfare Party.

Iran: Russian Ambassador on Cooperation With Iran

NC2603123096 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 17 Mar 96 p 8

[Interview with Russian Ambassador to Iran Sergey Tretyakov by unidentified ABRAR correspondent in Tehran on 14 March "prior to Yeltsin's confederation proposal"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [ABRAR] Mr. Tretyakov, as Russia's diplomatic representative in Iran, what are your feelings and your assessment of the proliferating relations between Moscow and Tehran which have entered a new stage after more than 200 years? What new horizons do you perceive for these relations?

[Tretyakov] I should state that the results of the proliferating relations between the two countries that we

are witnessing are due to the efforts and eagerness of the Russian and Iranian leaderships. Besides, by utilizing this opportunity that has arisen I should state in this interview that my counterpart in Moscow, that is the Iranian ambassador in Russia, is working hard. I wish to express my appreciation for his services in the broadening of these bilateral relations.

You referred to the wonderful relations between the two countries and I should point out that these relations are based on a firm foundation. In the last years of the former Soviet Union, a firm basis had been forged for broadening relations between Moscow and Tehran. The other issue is that as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of economic problems in Russia and Iran, optimum utilization of the potential and existing economic resources in the two countries was difficult.

However, now the situation has changed and Russia is in the process of extricating itself from economic problems. In your country as well economic problems are being successfully resolved. Hence there seems to be no problem in the path of reinvigorating relations between the two countries. On the contrary, there is much to do in many areas.

In any case, regardless of economic relations between Iran and Russia, I should also refer to political relations between the two countries. The visit by Dr. Velayati — your foreign minister — to Moscow indicates the high level of these relations. These relations are the outcome of the reciprocal goodwill that exists between the officials of the two countries.

In my opinion it is not necessary that I should embark on a detailed account of the various fields of political cooperation with Iran as I have referred to these in the past. However a cursory mention would not be ill-advised. We have had and still have close cooperation on Tajikistan which has yielded beneficial results so far.

Now I should mention the Caspian Sea issue. The stances of Russia and Iran have been very close as compared to those of other littoral countries of the Caspian region. In fact, I can say that they have been the same in practice.

The other issue is that of Nagorno-Karabakh. As regards other regional problems, we have exchanged views with our Iranian friends on issues such as Afghanistan and the Balkan peninsula.

Here I would like to point out that some months ago, we were seeking to bring the economic relations between the two countries to the same level as our political relations. The visit by Oleg Davydov, the Russian deputy prime minister to Tehran, facilitated the resolving of economic problems between the two countries and to delineate new and bright horizons for Russian-Iranian economic cooperation. As a result of this visit a protocol was drafted by the two sides which specified the areas of cooperation. This indicates the firm will and determination of the officials of our respective countries for the growth of bilateral relations.

[ABRAR] A while ago, one of the Russian officials announced that this country will send a special emissary in order to help ameliorate relations between Iran and Iraq. Has such a step taken place yet?

[Tretyakov] Unfortunately, I do not have any information in this regard. However I can say, in principle, that in Russia we are in favor of improved relations between Iran and Iraq on the basis of goodneighborliness, mutual understanding, and reciprocal cooperation. If we are asked to assist in this regard, we will study the matter.

[ABRAR] In conjunction with the broadening of relations between Russia and Iran, the United States expresses its opposition and apprehension from time to time. For example on Tuesday [12 March] the U.S. State Department spokesman said: We are concerned about the broadening of relations between the two countries. During his visit to Moscow, the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will discuss the matter with his Russian counterpart Yevgeniy Primakov. I believe that the U.S. concern does not extend only to the peaceful nuclear cooperation between the two countries. This cooperation has been endorsed by the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA]. What is your appraisal of this situation?

[Tretyakov] Of course, the U.S. officials' remarks expressing apprehension at some aspects of Russian-Iranian relations is not something new. Right from the outset of our peaceful nuclear cooperation with Iran, the United States has repeatedly sought to obstruct and halt it.

Similarly, our technical and military cooperation has also elicited Washington's opposition and the United States is exerting pressure so that this cooperation may also be halted. I should assert that Russia is an independent country and chooses its own friends. If the United States has any problem with Iran, this is the problem of the United States and has no connection with Russia.

[ABRAR] Mr. Tretyakov, I believe that it has problems with Russia as well and that the U.S.' apprehension is not limited only to the cooperation between the two countries in the field of peaceful nuclear cooperation. It is perturbed by the regional and even continental aspects of the cooperation between Iran and Russia.

If we were to view the regional dimension of this cooperation we should state that the relations between the two countries can extend beyond the confines of bilateral relations to embrace Central Asia and the Caucasus. For example as you mentioned, this cooperation has stretched to Afghanistan and therefore can encompass other regions as well...[ellipsis as published]

[Tretyakov] I stated that we do exchange views on Afghanistan....

[ABRAR] Well, it makes no difference. If exchanges of views go a step further, they evolve into cooperation which can extend to the entire region. In general I should refer to Russia's foreign policy which has changed in the Middle East and after the appointment of Primakov to the post of Russian foreign minister, it is the consensus of international opinion that Moscow has developed a new perspective on the Middle East.

[Tretyakov] You have referred to Mr. Primakov's assuming the position of the Russian foreign minister. In fact, I should state that this is an unprecedented issue in the history of our country's diplomacy. This is because the person who is now Russia's foreign minister is an expert on Islamic countries' affairs. However this does not mean that he is not an expert on relations with the West. In the entire history of Russia, whether before the October Revolution or after it, Eastern countries have had a special and extremely important place in Russian foreign policy.

As you stated, there has been a turnaround toward Eastern countries in Russian foreign policy. Keeping in view that Iran is one of the most important countries in the region in all fields and that we have longstanding historical ties with Iran, the lack of a land border is no obstacle to the broadening of our relations and the Caspian Sea has become a bridge of friendship between the two governments and peoples.

Once again, I emphasize that Iran has a special place in Russian foreign policy and we want strategic, long-term, and growing relations with Iran. In addition to the aforementioned points, there are other common factors between us and one of them is the expanding of NATO.

[ABRAR] So you concur with my analysis that the United States may not have any problem with Russia but is opposed to Tehran-Moscow relations and their impact?

[Tretyakov] Once again I repeat that this is the United State's problem, because our relations and cooperation with Iran are not directed against any other country and are solely for the interests of the two countries and the peace and stability of the region.

[ABRAR] Recently one of the Russian scientists Yuriy Vulikhev announced that a foundation of nuclear research will be established with the participation of the PRC, India, and Iran. The United States has also expressed concern in this regard. What objectives will this foundation pursue?

[Tretyakov] Since the outset of the peaceful nuclear cooperation between Russia and Iran, it was decided that it would not end with the completion of the Bushehr nuclear power plant. There is a possibility that after the Bushehr nuclear power plant is completed, Russia will assist the Islamic Republic of Iran in the construction of a new nuclear power plant.

[ABRAR] Has this subject been discussed?

[Tretyakov] This is merely a plan and a protocol has been signed in this regard earlier. Now I will answer the rest of your question. One aspect of nuclear cooperation is scientific and investigative research into the various fields of peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. This was no secret issue and the Americans knew of this earlier, which is why we cannot understand their present stance.

[ABRAR] You mentioned exchanges of viewpoints between Russia and Iran on Afghanistan. Is the rumor true that Moscow wishes to play a role greater than a mere exchange of opinion regarding Afghanistan?

[Tretyakov] No. Recently there has been propaganda in some countries, especially Islamic countries, regarding Russian military assistance to Kabul. I hereby deny the rumors that Russia is assisting the Afghan Government by land, air, or through Tajikistan.

There is no truth in the allegation that Russian experts are engaged in the reconstruction of the airports or military areas. Those who disseminate such false and baseless rumors have only one objective, and that is to mask their own interference in Afghanistan.

Russia is actively seeking to assist in resolving the Afghanistan crisis and those who disseminate such fallacious rumors regarding Moscow's policy are doing so to exclude Russia from the process of resolving the Afghan crisis.

[ABRAR] Of course one should not forget that such countries wish to compare the danger from Russia as that of the Soviet Union's military aggression in Afghanistan and accordingly to tarnish the country's image among the Islamic countries.

[Tretyakov] Yes, this is true.

[ABRAR] My next question pertains to the establishment of a confederation [preceding word in English]

with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan as members. According to Oleg Soskovets, the first deputy prime minister [title as published], your President Boris Yeltsin is to make an announcement to that effect.

This has given rise to a question. It is possible that Belarus may welcome Yeltsin's plan, but President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan had expressed opposition in a speech to the revival of the Soviet Union or any similar phenomenon and had stressed greater convergence [hamgera'i] and support with CIS member countries. How will such a plan be justified and can it be successful?

[Tretyakov] The deepening of the trend of cooperation and convergence among CIS countries is a vital need. This is because as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the economic and industrial relations among the republics were disrupted and this exerted a negative effect on the vital security and defense matters of the CIS countries and their overall position in international relations. This trend and inclination that we perceive today can be considered as a renewal of cooperation and is a natural phenomenon.

In this regard, I wish to state that by promoting the latest initiatives, Russia is not seeking to resuscitate the Soviet Union and this is not part of our agenda. However, as for what the level of the cooperation and relations among the CIS member countries will be, this depends on the wishes of Russia and the other countries. Hence, if Belarus is definitely in favor of creating a federation, we will not oppose it and on the other hand we will not force Belarus into a federation. This is the trend which is forging ahead gradually. For example in the past few years, the customs and land ownership unions and so on have emerged. Therefore we should stress the point that the formation of a federation would mean the safeguarding of the equal rights of all member countries. If Kazakhstan has a different viewpoint, no one can force it to participate.

[ABRAR] You mentioned the issue of convergence among the CIS member states which seems rather strange. On the one hand they are broadening relations with Russia, on the other there is a completely opposite trend. For example, there is a country in the Caucasus region which holds talks with you and offers you strategic bases there. Subsequently it opposes the idea and becomes a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace plan. Then it invites NATO forces into Nagorno-Karabakh and thus allows Western countries to interfere in that country's political decisionmaking. In my view this a very double-sided trend. How do you appraise this?

[Tretyakov] It is quite natural for every country to seek its own interests. In any case the meaning of convergence among the CIS countries is not that they cannot have cordial relations with other countries...

[ABRAR] This seems to contradict the trend of convergence. On the one hand we observe closeness of relations and on the other, we see the tendency in that country to move away from the center.

[Tretyakov] If they had relations with Russia only, they would not have the opportunity to obtain whatever is not available in Russia. The relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the countries in the Central Asian and Caucasian region are one such example. We welcome the growth and proliferation of these relations, the establishment of which is not merely for economic reasons...

[ABRAR] I was not alluding to Iran; I meant the West and countries such as Turkey....

[Tretyakov] In any case, relations between Iran and that area assists in strengthening relations between the two sides and the stability of the region in general. Of course, on the other hand, there comes a time when a country wishes to transform the region into a scene of rivalry in order to gain predominance over the region. This situation is quite intolerable for us and we are opposed to it. However this does not imply that Russia considers that cooperation and convergence among CIS countries depends on severance of these countries' links with all other countries.

[ABRAR] Primakov, the Russian foreign minister, opposed NATO's expansion in his remarks on Wednesday [13 March]. As I remember, in a previous interview with ABRAR you had stated that in the event of the NATO's expansion Russia will sign a defense pact with the countries of the former Soviet Union. At that time, Pavel Grachev, the Russian defense minister also said that in the event of the expansion of NATO, Moscow would sign defense pacts with the former Soviet Union countries, and some Asian and East European countries. In view of the fact that the United States and Western countries are insisting on NATO's expansion, is Russia going to implement its idea and have any steps been taken in this regard?

[Tretyakov] We expect not only the Western countries but even those countries which wish to become NATO members, to keep Russia's stance on the subject in mind. If NATO expands, Russia will display its reaction which is natural. At present I do not wish to explain what Moscow's reaction will be in the event of NATO's expansion or what tactics it will adopt. As far as I know, Moscow is formulating a program for this purpose.

However it has been mentioned in news and the press that the Russian deputy foreign minister had mentioned the possibility of stationing Russian missiles in some countries. Of course this is not and will not be the best solution.

In any case, I am aware that at the time of the convocation of the recent CIS summit session in Moscow, the outlook for cooperation in military and security matters was reviewed.

[ABRAR] You mentioned Eastern Europe. Following the cease-fire after the Dayton accord was signed in former Yugoslavia, the West, or I should state, the United States is seeking to broaden its influence. In view of Russia's historical interests in the Balkans, how do you view the U.S. efforts?

[Tretyakov] Regarding the Balkan crisis, some of the current trends prevailing in Bosnia-Herzegovina are a source of concern for us; we did not make it a secret at the session on the Bosnian situation recently. We also expressed our views on the departure of Serbs from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Russia's views in general will be presented at the upcoming session of the international contact group in Moscow. I believe that one should not act in such a manner that in order to resolve one crisis, a new crisis is created.

[ABRAR] I thank you, Mr. Tretyakov, for giving us this interview.

[Tretyakov] I also thank you and convey New Year greetings to the Iranian nation.

Iran: AFP Cited on Unrest in Bahrain

NC2703065196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0230 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] AFP reports that Bahrain was the scene of extensive unrest yesterday. The report adds that hundreds of raging demonstrators protested against the execution of a Bahraini youth by shouting slogans in Manama and surrounding areas. Bahraini security forces used tear gas to disperse the demonstrators.

News agencies reported on the arrest and wounding of hundreds in yesterday's unrest. These news agencies report that Bahrain witnessed one of its most critical days yesterday.

Iran: Commentary Views Nuclear Threat, Waste Dangers in Region

LD2703123496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1001 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Egyptian Foreign Ministry announced yesterday it is studying the report about the leakage of nuclear waste from the Dimona reactor in the southern part of the Negev desert in occupied Palestine.

Quoting nuclear specialists, the television channel of the Zionist regime has announced in recent days that special containers for burying nuclear waste around the Dimona atomic center are in danger of disintegrating and leaking.

At a time when, with the collapse of the eastern bloc and the disappearance of the bipolar system of the world, international circles and peace-seeking countries have been making extensive efforts to destroy and ban the testing of nuclear weapons, it can be seen that some governments are persisting in their hardline positions and endangering international peace, stability, and security with their continuing nuclear activities.

In the midst of all this, the Zionist regime, disregarding international recommendations made by the United Nations and regional countries about the illegality of nuclear testing and the storing and burying of nuclear waste, is continuing its activities in this field. The issue of leakage from these nuclear waste containers, which were buried 30 years ago in the south of occupied Palestine, has been raised in circumstances in which similar containers buried in the United States caused severe pollution after 20 years. Bearing in mind the length of the useful life of such containers, it would seem that the start of the leakage must go back quite some time and that the danger of pollution threatening this region is much more serious than the reports suggest.

The Zionist regime, which joined the group that possesses nuclear weapons many years ago, has, according to some reports, about 200 nuclear warheads and bombs. In the opinion of international experts, possessing this number of nuclear warheads and that regime's efforts to produce other conventional weapons will bring about unpleasant consequences. And, as can be seen, at a regional level, the occurrence of such incidents, as the leakage of nuclear material, poses a serious threat to people and to the environment and the continuation of such a state of affairs intensifies the aggressive and militaristic nature of that regime's officials.

In the meantime, the escalation of the nuclear activities of the Zionist regime, the production of conventional

weapons, and the fact that this regime has not signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the convention on biological weapons has caused insecurity in the countries of the region, such that Israel's nuclear program has intensified the arms race in the Middle East and has meant that many of the governments of the region have embarked on purchasing advanced conventional weapons and have made their decision to join some disarmament agreements conditional on the Zionist regime joining the system for the control of nuclear weapons.

This is at a time when the Zionist regime's refusal to do so and the support given by some developed nuclear powers, especially the United States, for the obstinacy of the Zionist regime have caused increasing tension in the important and sensitive Middle East region. On the international level, too, the Zionist regime's indifference to and refusal to join international conventions has intensified instability in the world and posed a serious threat to international peace and security.

At the international level, this regime, in unity with some major nuclear powers, has engaged in making baseless allegations against other governments to deflect international public opinion from its own nuclear programs, such that, by exaggerating the availability of nuclear technology to others, it uses this as a lever to exert pressure on the countries of the region.

Thus, what is required is that organizations supervising the nuclear activities of governments, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, should subject that regime's activities to close scrutiny and to put pressure on it, demanding that it should join and respect international conventions, because this, along with the destruction of the nuclear warheads piled up by the Zionist regime, would be the only way to free the Middle East from the threat of nuclear insecurity.

Iran: Guardian Council Rejects Election Results in 2 Regions

LD2703111996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Guardian Council today held a session. [passage omitted]

The file of Khodabandeh constituency was also discussed and the validity of the elections was approved as it has been mentioned in Form 39 [as heard]. Therefore, Mr. Seyyed Mohammad 'Ali Musavi was approved as a deputy to the Majles.

The file of Ardakan constituency was also discussed. The ballot boxes numbered 20, 25, and 28 in Maybud were announced totally annulled. Also 65 votes casted in ballot box number 15 in Ardakan were also announce void. As a result, Mr. Seyyed 'Akbar Hoseyni-Nezhad was approved as a deputy to the Majles.

The file of Esfahan and Mayandoab constituencies were also discussed and the validity of the elections in those constituencies were not approved. Therefore, the elections in these constituencies were announced annulled.

Iran: Islamic Coalition Association Officials on Elections

NC2603205596 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 14 Mar 96 pp 1, 2

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The fifth term Majles elections were the best elections since the victory of the Islamic Revolution because of the people's turnout and their enthusiasm.

This was stated by Prof. Habib Asgar-Owladi, secretary general of the Islamic Coalition Association [ICA] yesterday at the 27th session of the Association that was held at the Islamic Coalition's Martyrs' elementary school. Mr. Asgar-Owladi also assessed the fifth term elections.

He said that the extent of the people's presence at the elections for the fifth term of the Majles was similar to the referendum for the Islamic Republic on 12 Farvardin 1358 [1 April 1979] and said: The outcome of the elections was unforeseeable for world observers who never thought that the Iranian Muslims would have such a great turnout with such enthusiasm at the elections, despite the problems world arrogance is creating for Islamic Iran and the attempted distraction of public opinion with their propaganda bombardment.

Prof. Asgar-Owladi pointed out: The outcome of the fifth term Majles elections is a great source of pride for the Islamic Republic of Iran on the international scene.

He also referred to the healthiness of the elections and said: With the Council of Guardians' sanctioned supervision on the elections and the role of the interior ministry, we can say that as far as healthiness is concerned, the fifth term elections were unprecedented in the history of the country.

He added: As far as the approval of the eligibility of the candidates was concerned, the Council of Guardians, the executive committees, and the supervisory committees performed in the best possible way.

The secretary general of the ICA lauded the efforts of the Council of Guardians and the interior ministry in

holding healthy elections and said: The fifth term elections were the healthiest elections as far as safeguarding the ballot boxes, voter registration, and the counting of votes. Of course, this does not mean that no violations took place.

He then went on to refer to some violations in the elections and said: Criticizing the Militant Clergy and the fourth term of the Majles, as well as condemning people who follow the Imam's line, who obey the esteemed leader, and who support the president cannot have been done with good intentions.

Stating that the campaign was unequal, Mr. Asgar-Owladi said: Unequal campaigns are unjustifiable, and this type of propaganda is outside the framework of the law.

He added: Those who have committed violations in the campaigns should know that the interior ministry, the Council of Guardians, and the judiciary branch will confront any violation that is proven.

He said: The people involved in the election campaign and those who were in charge of the related institutions should take into consideration the fact that the eyes of 65 million people would have reported violations.

The secretary general of the ICA stressed: Those who have a free tribune at their disposal do not have the right to resort to campaigns in favor of an individual or a group on the day of the elections.

Pointing to the people's extensive presence at the second round of elections for the fifth Majles term, he said: Participation in the elections is a divine test, and it is our duty to participate in this test and to elect the best; and the line of the late Imam and of the supreme jurisconsult is the criterion for Islamic competence. [passage omitted]

Our correspondent reports that also during the conference, Mr. Asadollah Badamchian, executive secretary of the ICA, tendered a report on the ICA's activities in the fifth term elections and stressed the need for the people's active presence in the second round of the elections.

He said: The ICA formed an election staff one year ago, and this staff actively participated with the staff of the Tehran Militant Clergy in the elections.

The ICA executive secretary recalled: Our extensive and diversified activities in the elections of the fifth term of the Majles was the reason for the many strikes against this association, and many of the items that appeared in some newspapers and even in the foreign press only portrayed the rage felt by the enemies toward the ICA.

He added: The ICA carried out extensive, strong, and harmonious activities in the fifth term Majles elections, and its services to the Tehran Militant Clergy and to groups with similar ideas played an effective role in the elections.

He added: Popular force played an effective role in the distribution of the Tehran Militant Clergy's election campaign literature, and all our campaign literature was distributed by the people in a matter of five days.

In another part of his remarks, he referred to the existence of some violations in the elections and said: It is said that the mayors of three areas in Tehran have been summoned by judiciary authorities because of violations in the elections.

Iran: Minister Besharati Praises Armed Forces

LD2603163896 Tehran IRNA in English 1626 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 26, IRNA — Interior Minister 'Ali-Mohammad Besharati said here Tuesday [26 March] that the Islamic Republic of Iran's armed forces were popular and prestigious with the people and in that respect unique among armed forces with the rest of the world.

Besharati, who made the remark at a joint morning ceremony of the law enforcement forces and armed forces in southern Bushehr Province, said that the Islamic republic armed forces had brought honor, dignity and victories under the wise leaderships of the father of Islamic Revolution, late Imam Khomeyni and the leader of Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i.

He added that such glories and revolutionary values would be recorded in the everlasting and glowing history of Islamic Revolution and in the glorious records of the eight years of sacred defense (Iraqi imposed war-1980-88).

Moreover, he lauded the forces in maintaining security during the 5th parliamentary elections and in fighting drug traffickers and pushers, which has led to a tremendous drop in the consumption of lethal narcotics.

Iran: Nateq-Nuri—Investment Should Lessen Oil Dependence

LD2703141396 Tehran IRNA in English 1353 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sari, Mazandaran Prov., March 27, IRNA — Majles speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri said on Wednesday [27 March] that investments in the country should be orientated towards areas which will put an end to the country's dependence on oil.

Nateq-Nuri was speaking to the staff of the 'Linter-Pak' factory which he inaugurated earlier on Wednesdsay in the provincial city of Behshahr.

He said a country like Iran with abundant natural resources should cut its dependence on oil revenues.

One of the means to materialize such an objective is to increase investment in industrial sector, the speaker stressed.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Nateq-Nuri pointed to the high potentials of the Caspian Sea province of Mazandaran and said efforts should be made to create more job opportunities.

He termed Linter-Pak as one of the most important projects implemented in the area of processing industries.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Minister Urges Universal 'Right to Development'

BK2703050496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Pakistan has called for giving substance to the right to development. The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, in his statement said the right to development is to be related with the human rights. He said this right has been acknowledged with hesitation and is yet to be translated into action by the international community. He proposed appointment of a special rapporteur by the Commission on Human Rights to review the economic and social policies and find out suggestions to promote universal right to development.

Pakistan: Mauritian President Views Regional Tension, Bilateral Ties

BK2603164296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Mauritius president, Mr. Cassam Uteem, has expressed his country's readiness to contribute in the reduction of tension in the region. Addressing a news conference in Karachi this evening before leaving for home after a five-day visit to Pakistan, he said he is going back more aware of the problems of the region and about tension that exists in the countries of the region. He said as a friend of both Pakistan and India, he will do his best to see how his country can contribute to reducing tension in the region. Mr. Cassam Uteem said the countries of the region better know their problems; however, if his country can help in the solution of these problems, it will be ready for it. About bilateral relations, President Uteem said that they had very fruitful discussions with President Leghari and Prime Minister Ms. Benazir Bhutto. The Mauritius president said that he has extended invitations to both Pakistan president and the prime minister to visit Mauritius, which they have accepted.

Pakistan: Maritime Boundary Agreement Signed With Oman

BK2603151496 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Rawalpindi today, Pakistan and Oman signed an agreement on the delimitation of the maritime boundary and exclusive economic zone. Additional secretary in the Ministry of Defense, Rear Admiral Abdul Aziz Mirza, and Oman's ambassador, Mr. (Hamad Bin-Nassib Mansour Atoubi), signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments.

The two sides deliberated upon the maritime boundary matter in depth. It was agreed that for plotting in-common points, the principles of equidistance be adopted. A committee of experts will form for finalization of the draft before the next meeting in Oman at an early date.

Pakistan: Foreign Minister Denounces Planned Kashmir Elections

BK2603151696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, has said Indian designs to hold the bogus elections in occupied Kashmir would increase tension in the region, as such an election farce has been rejected vehemently by the Kashmiri people.

The foreign minister told the 52d session of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva that the so-called elections in the past failed to satisfy the wishes of the Kashmiri people, as they were demanding a plebiscite in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. The foreign minister quoted the so-called election drama staged by India in 1989, which resulted in sparking the current Kashmiri struggle. He said India must undertake a genuine dialogue for a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute on the basis of nonpapers exchanged in early 1994, including one on the Kashmir issue. He said it was also responsibility of the international community not to sit passive but to help India and Pakistan sustain their dialogue on the issue for achieving peace and justice.

[Islamabad PTV Television Network in English at 1300 GMT on 26 March in a similar report quotes the

foreign minister as saying: "The people of Kashmir still await the implementation of legally binding agreements between India and Pakistan embodied in the Security Council resolutions. Nothing has happened in the past to nullify these agreements. The Simla Agreement has merely affirmed the need for a final settlement of the Kashmir issue."]

Pakistan: Minister Affirms Offer for Dialogue With Opposition

BK2603145696 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the National Assembly, the federal minister for law, justice, and parliamentary affairs, Professor N.D. Khan, reiterated the government's offer of dialogue with the opposition on important national issues.

He was responding to the speech of leader of the opposition on the Supreme Court decision regarding appointment of judges. Leader of the opposition Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif in his speech said the decision of the Supreme Court is in the national interest and hence it should be implemented. He said the opposition is ready to have dialogue with the government on this issue.

The law minister dispelled the impression that there is any legal or constitutional crisis in the country. He welcomed the opposition's conciliatory attitude. He said the government has always been keen to forge consensus on basic issues.

Mr. Ghulam Syed Kathia, Choudhry S.N. Iqbal, Mr. Mahmud Khan Achakzai, and Mr. Zafarullah Jamali also took part in the debate.

Pakistan: MQM Decides To Contest Senate By-Election

BK2503103396 Karachi BUSINESS RECORDER in English 25 Mar 96 p 4

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi — The MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] has decided to contest the senate bye-election scheduled to be held on April 9 Shoaib Bukhari MPA [Member of Provincial Assembly] Deputy Leader of Opposition in Sindh Assembly said on Thursday [21 March]. The bye-election is being held to the seat vacated by Fida Hussain Dero, who has been elected to the National Assembly from Sanghar constituency.

Bukhari has demanded of the Govt to shift five MQM MPAs of Sindh Assembly to Karachi from various prisons. He had also sought assurance from the Government that those Haqparast [Altaf Hussain's MQM group] MPAs who have gone abroad for reasons of safety would not be arrested on return.

In a communication to the Chief Election Commissioner, Bukhari alleged that the government was using every "possible means against them to change their loyalties".

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Radio Reports 15 Soldiers Killed in Tiger Attack

BK2603115396 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A large group of terrorists attacked a security forces patrol at Pulmoddai in the Trincomalee District yesterday. Troops retaliated effectively, causing heavy Tiger casualties. Reinforcements were also rushed in from the Pulmoddai and (Aradpatnaga) detachments. The Operational Headquarters of the Defense Ministry says that 15 soldiers were killed and three others wounded during the confrontation.

Meanwhile, LANKAPUVATH reports that the LTTE's military wing leader for Eravur was seriously wounded in Saturday's [23 March] abortive attack on the Eravur police station. The news agency quoted SSP [Senior Superintendent of Police] Tilak Wanikaratne as saying that Suresh was being treated in a village in the Batticaloa District.

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